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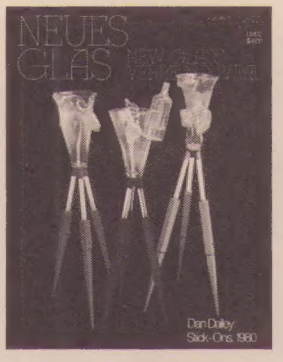

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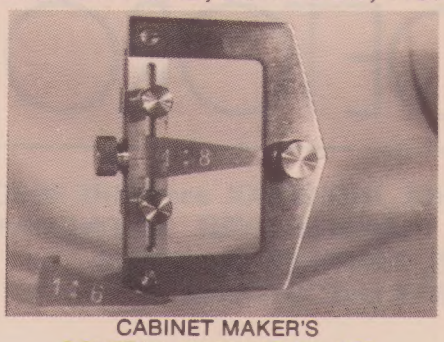

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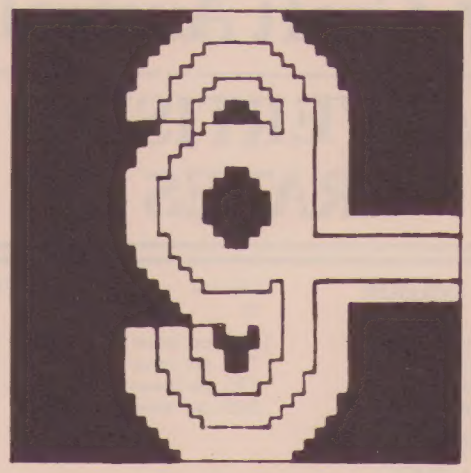

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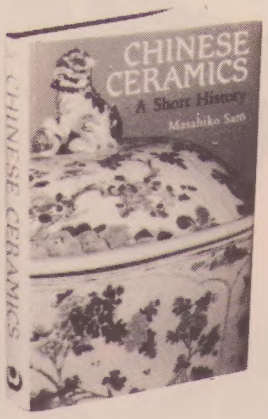

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Foreword by Jack Hillier

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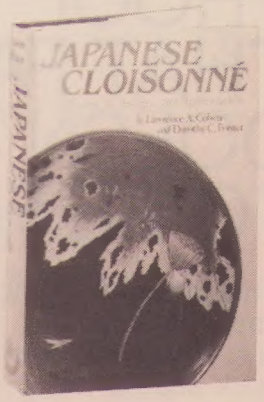

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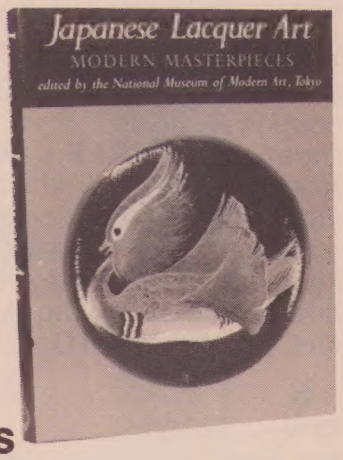

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2. *Entries must include at least two separately published articles. These may be features on individual craftsmen, critical reviews, general features on craft philosophy, general survey articles on the state of the crafts within Australia, and other related topics.*
3. *Entries must have been written and published within Australia in publications that are of nationally known stature, though not necessarily distributed nationally. These can be city, country or suburban newspapers, magazines and journals.*
4. *The award is open to journalists and to freelance writers whose work has been accepted for publication in the type of newspaper or magazine indicated above.*

THE RULES

1. *All entries must have been published during the year ending August 31, 1983.*
2. *Accompanying each entry should be:*
   (a) tear sheets or photostats of published material;
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4. *Entries will only be returned after judging if requested.*
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6. *Members of the staff of the Crafts Councils of Australia and of Ascraft Fabrics are excluded from participating in the Award.*

THE JUDGING

Entries will be judged on the significance of their contribution made to the whole body of writing on the subject of crafts, on consistency (in terms of steady output), authority (in terms of research and insight), and on the writing quality of the work presented.

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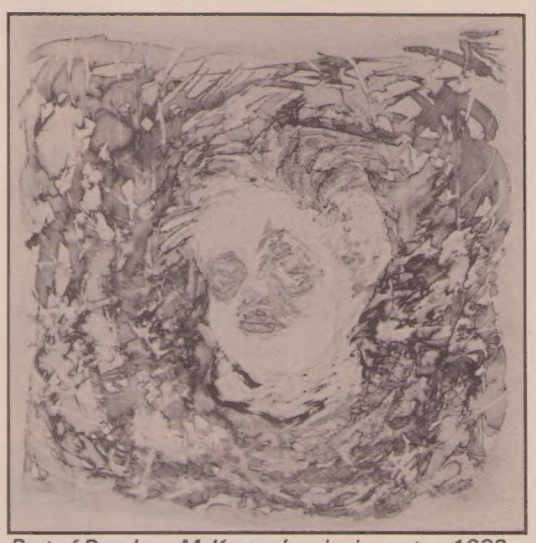

Part of Penelope McKeown's winning entry, 1982

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A finished work, produced during the residency, is to be presented to Hoechst Australia Limited for their textile collection.

Application forms and stipulated enclosures must be received at the Meat Market Craft Centre no later than 2nd September, 1983.

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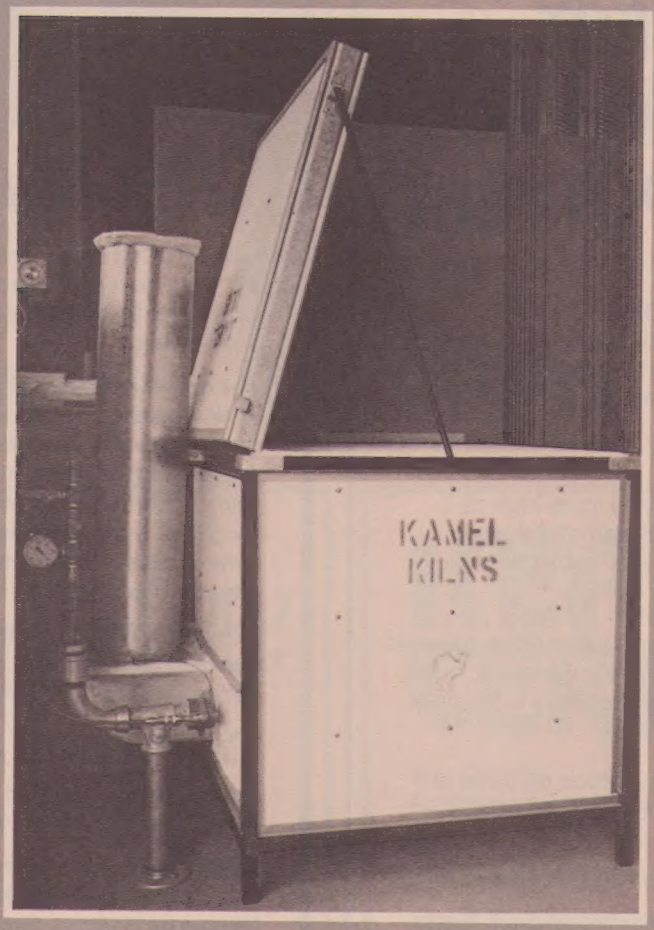

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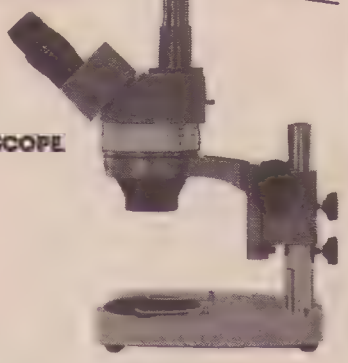

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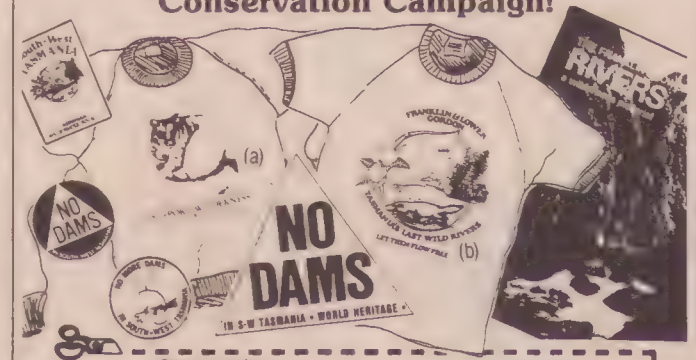

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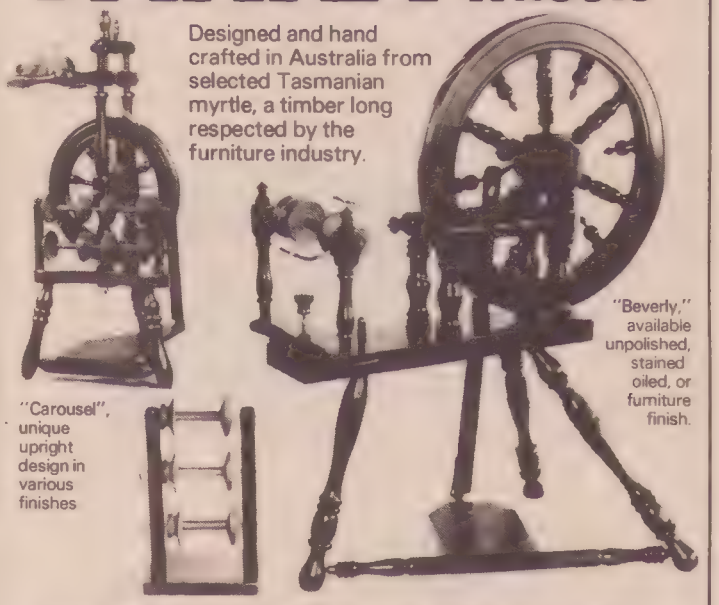

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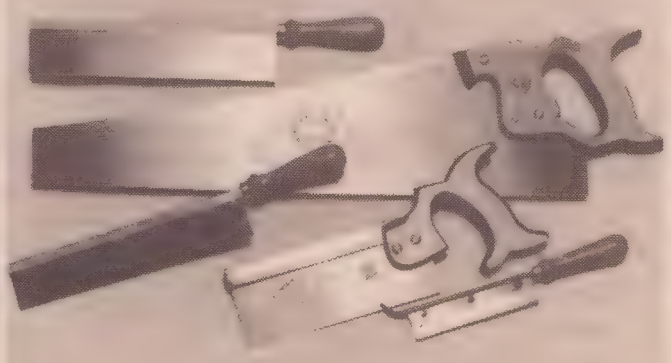

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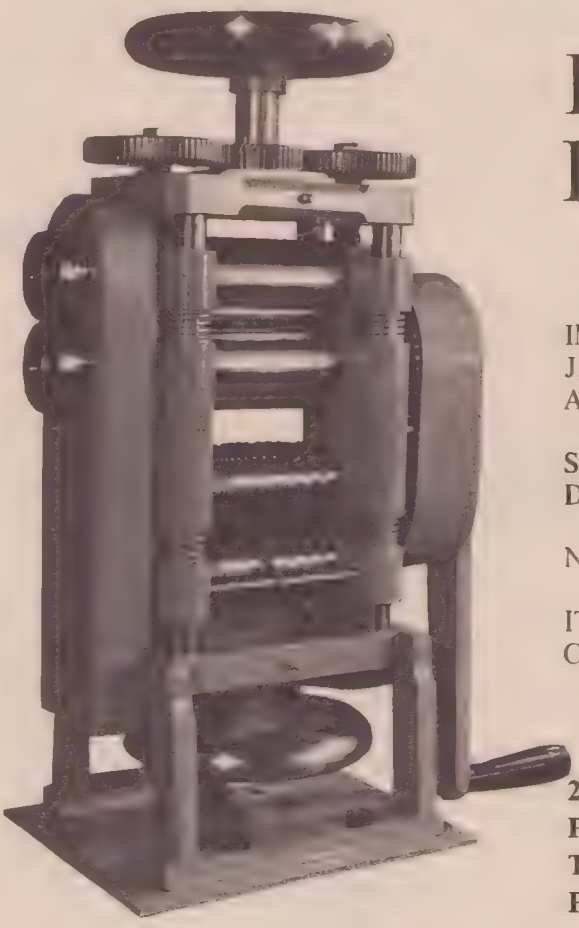

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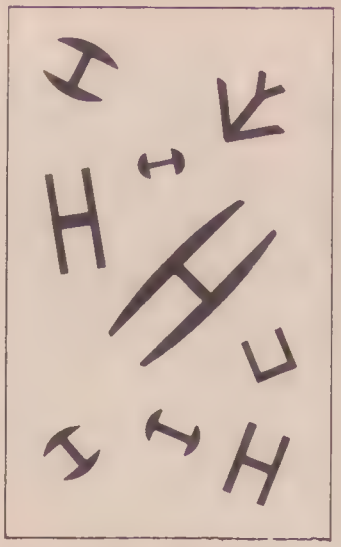

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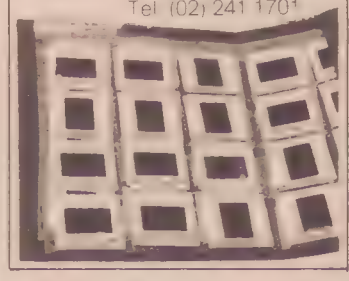

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Craft Australia

Cover
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Photograph by Clive Jeffery.

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Contents

FROM the increasing volume of material received, it is evident that the quarterly publication *Craft Australia* cannot keep pace with what is happening in all the major areas of craft activity. A significant proportion of this material deserves publication and would certainly be featured in the magazine if space permitted.

For this reason I would like to announce plans for an exciting new craft publication, *Craft Australia YEARBOOK 1984,* due out early next year. (See advertisement and pre-publication offer coupon on page 104).

The idea to produce a craft annual has probably been considered before but never has the need been as obvious as it is today. In order to maintain impetus in the contemporary craft movement it is crucial that new work and new ideas find adequate exposure. Exhibitions are an important traditional method of presenting new work but, unless they are extensively promoted and reviewed in the media, the potential audience is relatively small and the transmission of ideas limited.

The present issue of *Craft Australia* has now reached the maximum weight category for mailing, and is therefore unable to include additional material. The purpose of the *Yearbook* is to publish this additional material as a vital adjunct to the growing body of literature on the crafts, thereby ensuring that adequate documentation is maintained.

The 1984 edition will be the first in a series of *Yearbooks* aimed at documenting selected new work and events which occurred during the preceding twelve months, giving particular emphasis to previously unpublished work by established professional craftspeople. The *Yearbook* will also feature lively and provocative articles by informed craftspeople, academics and professional writers that comment upon and analyse innovative trends in contemporary crafts. It will also look closely at likely future developments in all major areas. Provision will be made for documentation of outstanding work by emerging craftspeople who are relatively unknown outside their immediate circle.

The *Yearbook 1984* is an exciting new project which I hope you will support *now* by placing your advanced order at one of the special pre-publication prices indicated on page 104. This offer is exclusive to subscribers.

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EPALTES AUSTRALIS Lessing, *Cotula rubriflora*

BANKS' FLORILEGIUM

THE very first craft project to be associated with colonial Australia began when the *Endeavour* set sail in 1768; it will only be fully completed more than two hundred years later.

On board the *Endeavour* were three artist-draughtsmen: Alexander Buchan was a figure and landscape painter about whom little is known, and who died in Tahiti early on the voyage; Herman Spöring, a Swedish naturalist and draughtsman who served as Banks' secretary and assistant; and Sydney Parkinson. Parkinson was born in Edinburgh, and was apprenticed as a woollen-draper. His delight in painting flowers and fruit soon led him into a career as a painter, and he went to London where his talents were immediately recognised. He was recommended to Joseph Banks who was in need of someone to sketch part of his growing collection of plants and specimens, and when Banks gained permission to accompany Cook on the impending voyage to the South Seas, he employed Parkinson at a salary of eighty pounds a year as a sea-going botanical draughtsman.

Parkinson had had no formal training in drawing, and yet had a 'marvellous facility for making botanical portraits'. He was also extremely hard-working, as he had to be to keep pace with the enormous collection of plants that Banks and Solander were amassing in the New World. On-the-spot pencil sketches were made at every landfall, then Parkinson would paint in a flower, a bud and a leaf, supplementing this colour information with notes jotted on the back of sketches. The specimens were then pressed and dried. Banks describes in his journal how each afternoon at sea he and Solander would sit across the table in the main cabin, checking the names and classification of the plants, and keeping a sharp eye on Parkinson to make sure that he got the botanical details right. But it was his own innate artistry that made each of his 269 completed paintings into works of art. These paintings were completed from over 800 reference drawings collected before Parkinson died on the ship between

Above: *Plate 80 from the Florilegium series; Vigna vexillata (Linnaeus), A. Richard in Sagra. Endeavour River (found there); sketched by Parkinson, painted by Nodder, engraved by Blyth*

Left: *Master-craftsman Edward Egerton-Williams preparing an original copper plate for colour reproduction*

Opposite: *Plate 162 from the Florilegium series; Epaltes Australis Lessing, from the Endeavour River; sketched by Parkinson, painted by Nodder, engraved by Mackenzie*

Java and the Cape of Good Hope.

In order to achieve his ambition of publishing his botanical collection in the grand manner, Banks employed Thomas Burgis, John Clevely, John Frederick Miller, James Miller and Frederick Polydore Nodder to finish the paintings in England. From 1771 to 1784, at a cost to Banks of seven thousand pounds, eighteen engravers, chief among them Daniel Mackenzie, produced 743 copperplates of superb workmanship and accuracy. All was in readiness for the long-awaited publication — but publication was never made, except for a few lithographed monochromes of the Australian flora at the beginning of this century, and a few other minor printings. On Banks' death the plates passed to the British Museum (Natural History).

In 1963 some of the plates were sent to the Royal College of Art so that proofs could be taken. It so happened that just at this time Mr J. G. Studholme of Alecto Historical Editions, publishers of art work, was involved with some artists at the Royal College. 'We heard about the plates, duly marvelled at their remarkable quality and the whole romance of this direct link with Cook's first great voyage, and thought wistfully how nice it would be to print and publish them'. But Alecto were commercial publishers and there was no chance that they would be permitted to have a hand in publication.

Ten years later the Royal College did select thirty plates which were published in black and white under the title of *Cook's Florilegium,* an edition of 100 books with text by Stearn and Blunt. In 1978 circumstances led Joe Studholme to an obscure cupboard in the British Museum, labelled *Plates from Cook's First Voyage,* in which lay all 738 extant plates, still bundled in their 18th century paper. Cutting through the tangle of events following the discovery of this "Aladdin's Cave", it is sufficient to say that Alecto Historical Editions, in conjunction with the British Museum (Natural History), is now publishing all 738 plates, 334 of them illustrating Australian flora collected on the east coast of New Holland in 1770. One hundred sets are to be printed, and no further printings will be made for 50 years.

Plate 84 from the Florilegium series; Castanospermum Australe. Cunning and Fraser, from the Endeavour River; sketched by Parkinson, painted by Nodder, engraved by Sibelius

It was first intended to publish the collection in black and white, but research soon convinced the Alecto team that the plates were crying out to be presented in colour, as Banks apparently intended. The tremendous task of "unlocking the mystery of transmogrifying the tarnished foul-bitten but exquisitely engraved plates into the beautiful works of art they are" in the present edition of *Banks' Florilegium,* fell to master-craftsman Edward Egerton-Williams, who is now running the production studio for the project. His first plan was to hand-colour mono-chromes lightly printed, but this suggestion was soon abandoned as being too time-consuming. Moreover, hand-colouring obliterated the fine lines so painstakingly engraved in the 18th century. It is the depth of thickness of each line that determines the sublety of colouring of the print.

But the first task was to remove the blemishes on the plates caused by the passage of time, fluctuations in atmospheric conditions and, above all, the acid content of the wrapping paper. It was also necessary to remove the hardened black ink remaining in the lines from the experimental printings originally made by the engravers to check the progress of their work. Careful burnishing had to be done by craftspeople using small burnishers and jewellers' rouge to smooth out the blemishes and restore the plates to pristine condition. Because copper is such a soft metal, each plate had to be chrome-faced to harden it even for an edition of only one hundred.

Egerton-Williams began to experiment with different methods of colour printing, finally arriving at a variation of the *a la poupee* method originally invented by the Dutchman Johannes Tyler in the 17th century, and developed largely by the French in the 18th century. A rolled bundle of cloth, the "dolly", is used to work the inks into the lines of the plate, which is afterwards wiped over with the butt of the thumb. As many as twelve or fifteen different inks per plate must be mixed, with sufficient ink in each colour for the complete run. The purest ground pigment is used, mixed with boiled linseed oil, and the inks stored in tubes which are cross-referenced with exact recipes and an accurate picture-area guide. Care must be taken to balance the overall intensity of the colours, and the finished result must be of absolute scientific accuracy. The latter is checked by the botanical editors of the *Florilegium,* Dr Chris Humphries and Mrs Judith Diment.

Once the colour is worked in, a process that can take up to three hours, the plate is ready for printing on the hand press, using specially manufactured small dampened Somerset mould paper. Each print is dried over six days between sheets of special blotting paper. After each impression the plate is wiped clean, then inked in again for the next printing. Each of the six printers engaged on the project is responsible for a particular plate from which 100 perfect impressions must be made, each one bearing the initials of the particular printer.

The completed prints are collated with their mounts and placed in Solander cases holding twenty-two or twenty-three prints, each measuring 57.15 x 73.66 cm (22½ x 29 ins).

It is not difficult to understand why the project of printing *Banks' Florilegium* in full colour will not be complete until 1987, and why the cost of each set of 738 prints is around $100,000.

The Australian flora, in 35 boxes, will be completed in 1988, appropriately timed to help us celebrate the Bicentenary, and an elegant tribute to Sydney Parkinson, artist and craftsman.

Rae Henson

THE LEATHER MASKS OF THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE

'Sometimes I think that what my father did to me was inevitable. Until something inside me clicked, making imposition superfluous, he chained me to the workbench.'

THE words are those of Donato Sartori, forty-three, Italy's leading mask maker. His work is the extension of a family research begun over thirty years ago by his father, Amleto Sartori.

Amleto Sartori rediscovered the technique of making masks in leather, a technique that had been lost for over two hundred years. It flourished as a craft during the hey-day of the *Commedia dell'Arte,* a powerful and comic form of masked theatre in Italy between 1550 and 1700 and from which the popular characters of Punch, Harlequin and Pierrot are all derived. When the *Commedia* died out, so did the technique for making the masks the performers used.

Rather than have his own discoveries die with him, Amleto Sartori decided that his son would become a mask maker too. When Donato was old enough to go to school, Amleto also put him to work in the workshop, sweeping floors, cleaning the studio and kneading the dirt from the clay. It was a hard apprenticeship, but Donato owes much of his own facility with materials to this preparatory experience.

The Sartori workshop is located in Abano Terme, a small village not far from Padua, where the family's interest in mask first evolved. Padua, with its university, became a focus for the renewal of Italian theatre that followed the end of the Second World War.

Amleto Sartori, then a local sculptor best known for his portrait work, was asked to create masks for productions by the university's theatre. It was the beginning of a research that was to continue until the end of his life.

Several important relationships developed through Amleto's work with the university to consolidate his commitment to mask making. One of these was his relationship with Jacques Lecoq, a French mime and theatre teacher who had been called to the university to teach mime and improvisation. A creative working relationship developed between the men. Sartori made masks for Lecoq's students, and through working with the masks, Lecoq was able to suggest modifications and new directions of research.

One product of their work together was a series of seven "expressive" masks, in which each mask represents a particular mood or emotion, such as love, joy, irrascibility, and so on. To make the series, Sartori and Lecoq spent many hours at the marketplace in Padua observing the local people; Sartori made sketches of selected individuals, while Lecoq studied their movements and gestures. Back at Amleto's workshop they combined their observations and came up with a completed series of masks.

Another joint research focused on the idea of a "neutral" mask — a human face with no fixed expression, no predetermined character. Lecoq needed a way of getting his students to act with their bodies, and not just their faces. And so Amleto was asked to create a mask that would allow the students to develop a sense of their physical expressiveness independent of their facial expression.

Georgio Strehler, Italy's best post-war theatre director, recalls a visit to Sartori's studio during the time of his work on the "neutral" mask:

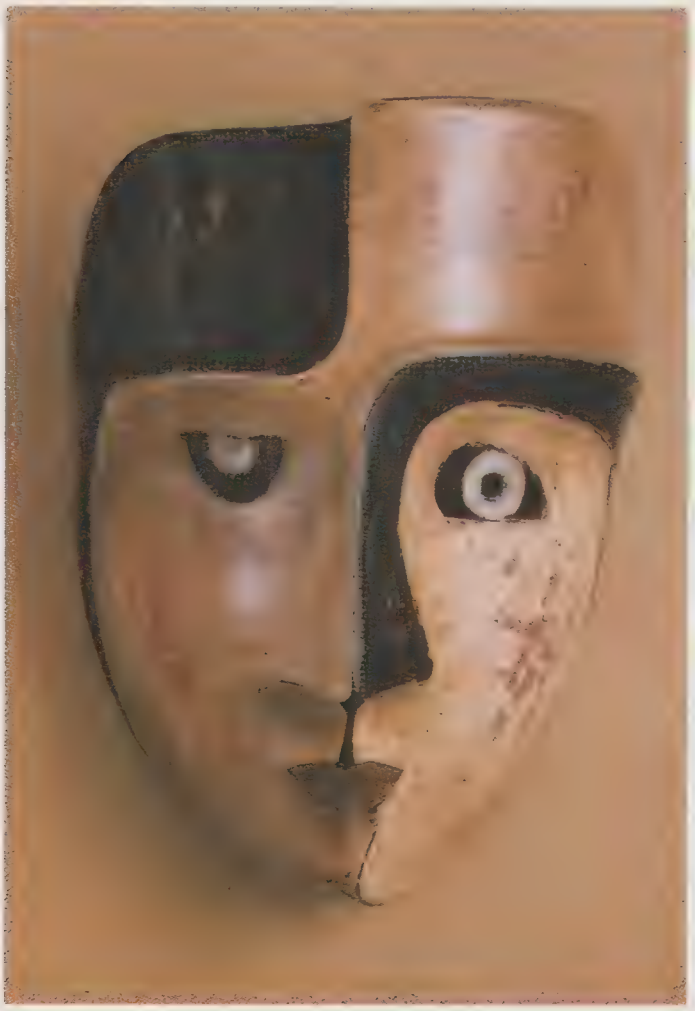
'It was a lovely and unforgettable sight to see nearly twenty masks spread out on Sartori's table in his studio, all of them a research in "neutrality", creating the shadow of a smile, a hint of perplexity or of sadness, and little by little becoming merely the transparent "human face". I consider it his masterpiece, a neutral mask, an expressionless mask. Sartori made innumerable attempts at it, and he repeated to me often that masks cost him more suffering and more concentration and severity of signs than any of his other works in sculpture.'

Strehler was the director of the Piccolo Tearto di Milano. Impressed with Amleto's work, he asked him to make masks for their revivals of *Commedia dell'Arte* plays.

Says Strehler, 'The first replicas for *Harlequin, Servant of Two masters* at the Piccolo in 1947 marked the real beginning (for Amleto). That was the first play in which the actors appeared masked. They wore masks practically made of paper that Sartori prepared in a very short time with very little money. These masks would

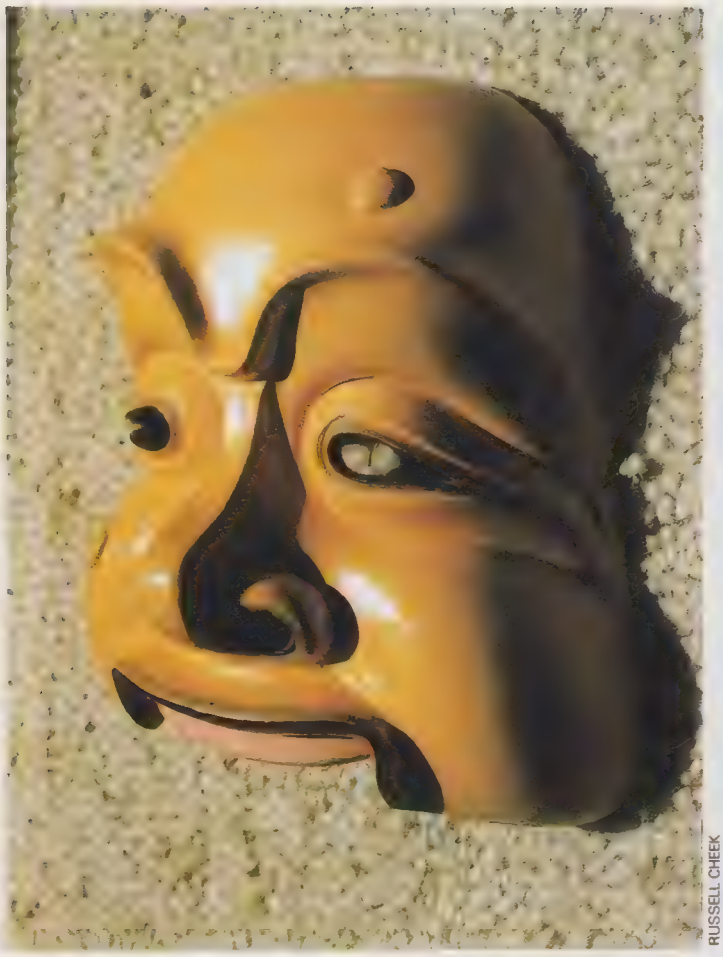
Harlequin mask from Goldoni's La Cameriera Brillante, *The Biennale of Venice, 1956*

Leather Commedia mask designed for Jacques Lecoq's School of Mime, Paris, 1982



Commedia mask of Gheghina from La Favola del Figlio Cambiato, *Piccolo Theatre, Milan, 1957*

Mask by Vanna Scoma for the production La Favola del Figlio Cambiato, *by Luigi Pirandello, Milan, 1957*

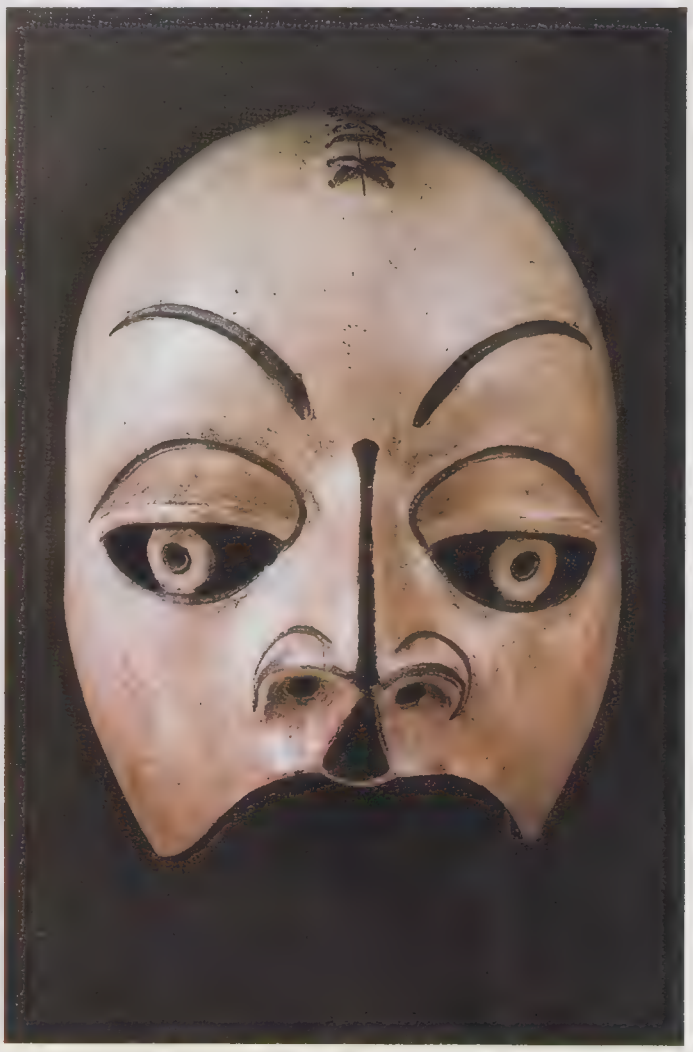


RUSSELL CHEEK

Mask of Tuogno by Russell Cheek (Australia), derived from Commedia drawings. Painted Japanese style, 1983

Mask by Vanna Scoma for the production La Favola del Figlio Cambiato, *by Luigi Pirandello, Milan, 1957*

Mask of warrior from The Drame du Fukuruju-Naru, *1963*



The Mother Superior in The Firebird, *by Prokofiev, 1955*

Life-size leather figures made from body castings, University of Padova, 1977

Neutral pantomime mask in leather, 1958. Jacques Lecoq's School of Mime, Paris

almost melt from the perspiration of the actors' faces, becoming damp rags by the end of each performance.

A year and a half later, Amleto had prepared the first masks in leather. It was Sartori who was the first to rediscover the techniques of mask making with its poetics and artisan terminologies. His first leather masks were, in fact, too hard — they hurt the face. It took time for him to succeed in producing a softer, more flexible mask. "The mask should fit like a glove," he would say. But developing that glove cost him years of hard work and research.

The only clues Amleto had were several old masks and one wooden mould held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. They were the finished product. But how did one work backwards and divine the process needed to create them?

It was slow work.

'Over a year of research, and the only result was a frail, inexact notion of the bookbinding technique used in Venice during the first half of the Renaissance,' observed Amleto in one of his journals kept during the time of his researches.

Adds Donato, 'Our first masks in leather were disappointing. It was incredibly difficult to recompose the phases and techniques of this primitive process. Most of the time we had to go by intuition, deducing things from the scarce bits of information available. But our masks rapidly became more and more exact and at last they were a success.'

The collaboration of father and son was a fruitful one. Soon their masks were sought after by companies across Europe, and their reputation had spread to the United States and Japan. The masks of the Sartoris have been featured in productions by Jean-Louis Barrault, Bertolt Brecht, Jacques Lecoq, the Piccolo Teatro di Milano and the Paris Opera, among others.

In 1962 their collaboration was cut short with the death of Amleto, of cancer, at the age of forty-five. Donato, who was then twenty-two, faced the task of taking over the studio on his own, maintaining the high level of work

Marcello Moretti in the half-mask created for him in L'amante Militaire, *by Carlo Goldoni, 1951*

that was the foundation of the studio's international reputation. That was twenty years ago. Today, the masks of Sartori are still the best. But now, Donato is the master of the studio.

Like his father, Donato Sartori is also a sculptor, and brings a sculptor's eye to his work. 'The mask is an exact object,' he says. The lines that carve out the face are its language, a language never verbose but essential, taut, and thus poetic. A distant spectator in the furthest section of the pit sees nothing but angles, planes, lights and shadows; through these he feels the vibrant nucleus of the character.'

Sartori masks have an impressive sculptural quality. Nothing is left to chance — they are powerful tools. In the hands of skilled performers they provide the key to a dynamic theatre.

'The biggest problem is not so much the ability to think up new ideas,' says Donato. 'What's difficult is knowing how to materialise them, otherwise the ideas simply miscarry. The same thing holds for mask as for painting or sculpture. There is an indispensable artisan dimension to these arts in the full sense of the traditional expression "arts and crafts".

'It is also a matter of the time spent every day with your tools in hand, until they become instinctive. If our studio is considered superior to others, it is because we continue to produce our masks every day.

'I feel the need for a rigorous and restless professionality through which I earn my daily bread, not just a casual or part-time activity. Otherwise the results will not be right. That a maskmaker knows how to make a functional and aesthetically pleasing mask is fine by me, but this is only the first part of his job as an artist, or to use a less equivocal and abused term, as an artisan. He must know

NICOLETTA BOTTIS

Pantaloon mask created by Donato Sartori

Mime artist Ferruccio Soleri

Harlequin cat mask, Amleto Sartori, 1950

Leather half-mask based on Capitano of the Commedia, created by Russell Cheek (Australia) for his one-person show Faces, Fakes and Falsehoods, *1983*

Harlequin mask from Jacques Lecoq's School of Mime

NICOLETTA BORIS

Pantaloon mask by Sartori

DAVID JOHNS

Russell Cheek wearing a half-mask he created for the role of 'Athol Newgard' — Minister for Lost Causes in his one-person production, Faces, Fakes and Falsehoods, *1983*

Direct body casting during a recent Gestural structures workshop

everything about that mask — its character, its history, how it will be used.'

For Donato Sartori, leather is the ideal material for masks. It is firm, yet supple. It allows the skin to breathe and, like a shoe or glove, will gradually take the shape of the user's features.

In recent years Sartori's experiments with leather and mask have led to an expanded vision of the mask. No longer content with seeing the mask as a tool for one actor, he has begun a new line of research into what he terms *struttura gestuale* (gestural structures) and formulated a program of outdoor "city mask" performances.

The "gestural structures" grew out of an experience Sartori had while running a workshop for workers in the industrial town of Mirano, in northern Italy. These men and women were not interested in learning how to make masks that seemed far removed from the realities of their own lives. They wanted to produce something closer to their own experience. The "gestural structures" that resulted from this exchange were a fusion of Sartori's own artistic skills with a powerful contemporary social vision. Human torsos produced in leather, with stitches like scars, dismembered, suspended like carcasses — these are the sacred emblems of industrial man.

To accommodate the new researches, Sartori founded the Centre of Masks and Gestural Structures, with Paolo Trombetta and Robert Terribile in 1979. The Centre's major focus has been the development of an outdoor performance during which the "mask" of a city or town is created. Here the mask is seen as something ephemeral, a structure that can redefine a conventional space, an event that can bring people together.

Environmental Adaptations performed with audience participation during the Biennale of Venice, 1980.
Opposite: *Gestural structure created during a workshop at Mirano, 1977*

Gestural structure created during a workshop at Mirano, 1977

Pulcinella mask, 1957. From a print by Carracci

Copies of the definitive book *'The Commedia dell' Arte and the Masks of Amleto and Donato Sartori'* are available in Australia from Lamella Distributions, P. O. Box 200, Woollahra, NSW 2025.

RUSSELL CHEEK

Half-mask in leather by Russell Cheek, 1982

RUSSELL CHEEK

Basle-style mask designed by Russell Cheek, 1982

The materials used are those of the industrial society. An acrylic fibre is used to create a fantastic "spider web" that transforms the usual appearance of the city space; at night lasers project huge images amongst the "webs". Contemporary music and theatre also have their place in the performance. For Sartori this new "environmental mask" is a way of giving a city back to its populace.

The performance is usually part of a larger festival, such as the Carnival of Venice, where the Centre constructed a city mask in the Piazza San Marco in 1980, or other towns such as Florence, Milano, Napoli, Genova, Padua, San Marino, Bologna, Nance in France and Caracas in Venezuela.

The Centre is also keen to pass on the techniques for working with mask and leather that have been accumulated.

'Today the workshop is open to anyone who wants to develop his skill,' explains Sartori. 'A lot of people start out but rarely stay long. So this wealth of technique and know-how risks having no heirs, and it is certainly not a legacy which can be kept alive by fixing it on paper. Only hands can make it known to others.'

Andrew Lindsay

Negotiations are under way to bring an exhibition of the works of the Centre for Masks and Gestural Structures to Australia, and also for a series of outdoor performances. A preview exhibition toured Australia in 1966.

The Sydney Performing Arts Collective is currently working in Australia with masks from the Sartori Centre. A member of the group, Nicoletta Boris, worked at the Centre, teaching mask making and mask performance at the Centre's workshops. For information about this or about the Centre for Masks and Gestural Structures, contact the Sydney Performing Arts Collective, 1 Lookes Avenue, East Balmain, Sydney. Telephone (02) 827 3251.

Traditional Balinese mask

Balinese-style wooden mask designed and carved by Cristina Wells, 1982

OLIVER STREWE

Harlequin mask in fibreglass, created by Melbourne artist, Suzi De Clario, 1983

Balinese-style mask by Cristina Wells, 1982

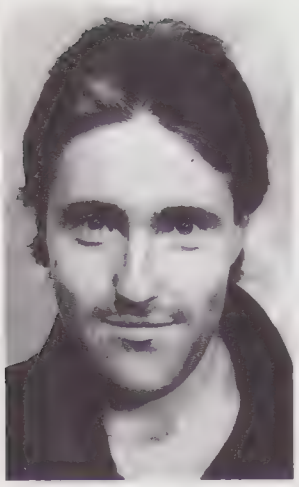
OLIVER STREWE

Harlequin mask by Suzi De Clario, 1983

MAY PORTER

Wooden mask carved by Cristina Wells, 1982

AUSTRALIAN MASK MAKERS



DAVID JOHNS

Russell Cheek

MY first experiences with the Italian theatre were in the years 1974-75, when an obsessive interest in circus clowns, mime, the early films of Fellini and an old clown called Teo Zachini, finally found expression in the founding of Pipi Storm community theatre.

After three years invaluable teething, experimentation, innovation and intense hard work, I found I had followed my intuition to the point of enrolling in the Ecole Jacques Lecoq, Paris, which was then an exciting and far-reaching decision. It meant putting into question everything I stood for, (even more than I had ever imagined), uprooting and spending two years in Paris. I spent three. Helped by grants from the Australia Council, the NSW Division of Cultural Activities and the Ian Potter Foundation, I realised in time that my choice of school had been singularly special in fulfilling the developmental directions I had been craving. No other school could have done so.

Naturally, in the course of growth and experience which has taken place since enrolling, (ie., the torrid input of the school and Paris, my further work in Europe, plus the year and a half I've worked back in Australia,) my own horizons and ambitions have widened enormously. However, the basic tenet of my reasons for craving experience remains — a strong commitment to the notion of creating exciting and stimulating live performances. Thus far, I feel my ambition in this area has been more than fulfilled.

Since graduating from the school some three years ago, I have worked in Italy, Germany, Holland and France, primarily in the founding of Double Take Theatre Company, which I brought to Australia in 1981-82. The company worked in Sydney, (Sydney festival, Nimrod,) Adelaide (Official Festival program) and in Melbourne (The Last Laugh.) It attracted a large following and was generally hailed as a breath of fresh air to Australian live theatre.

Tondon — the study of an indignant man — worn by its creator, Russell Cheek, in Faces, Fakes & Falsehoods, *Newcastle and Sydney, 1983*

DAVID JOHNS

Since the company finished working together in late 1982, I operated freelance for some time, directing and devising 'Howzatt' for Freewheels' T.I.E. Company, Newcastle, and then collaborating further with their director, Brent McGregor in the preparation of my first solo performance, 'Faces, Fakes and Falsehoods'.

The motivation for this production was threefold: first, to perform solo, second, to make a commitment to treating issues not usually viable in the context of group-devised and directed performances; third, to use the techniques of the half-mask.

At Lecoq, the mask was an untouched field of great interest, a completely new horizon open to us, one that at least I had never had contact with. This work took the form of a progression through the stages of neutral mask, Basle mask, expressive mask, (all full-face masks,) to the most refined order of mask, in the sense of evoking the most intense level of performance — the half-mask.

This was treated as the final stage of the two-year school, and was based on studies of the Commedia dell'Arte, both as a training to heighten the intensity of performance without the use of mask, and as a performance style in itself. Since touching on the Commedia at school, and having experienced a workshop with Stefano Perrocco, an acolyte of Sartori, I'd always had a desire to explore the style more thoroughly on my own terms, despite the fact that my work was taking me in other directions, for two years at least.

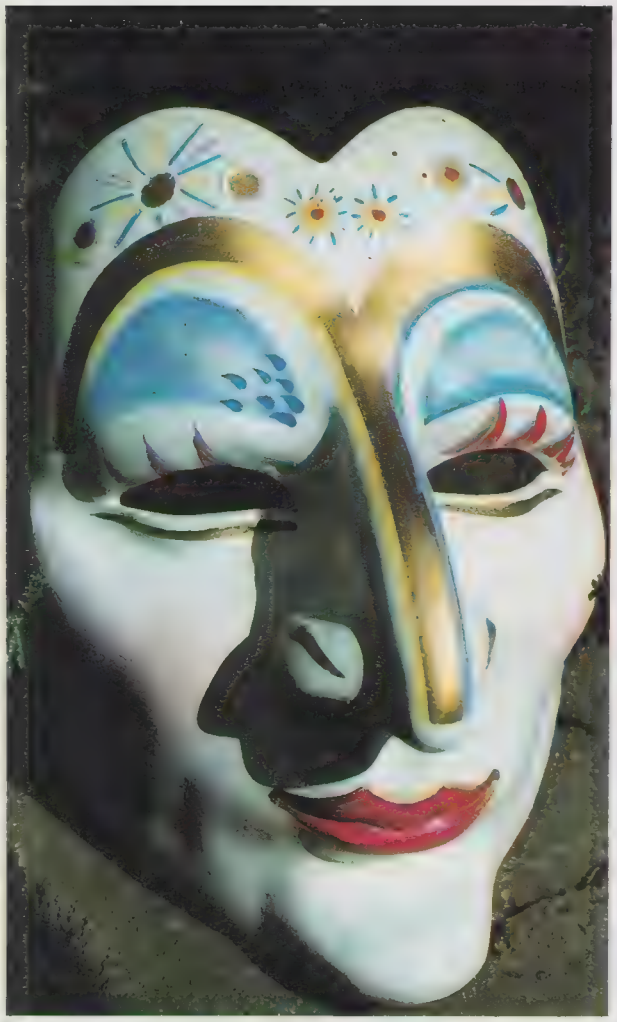
Then, on my own, I had the chance to conceive, write and produce my own show, 'Faces, Fakes & Falsehoods', in a Commedia style, using half-masks to portray several characters. I wanted to explore the rhymes, voices, larger-than-life characters of the half-mask. I engaged a Balinese mask-maker to help me in the initial stages of the project. He carved me some standard-issue Balinese masks, some Commedia masks, (usually with some variations according to my purposes,) and some wooden moulds, upon which I could fabricate masks in leather. We collaborated, sometimes melding styles for different effects.

All elements, my script, ideas, masks, characters, all exerted an influence on each other, in the hands of my director and myself, to produce an acting style of Commedia dell'Arte, using Commedia masks in leather and wood, plus Balinese masks, to describe characters who are for the most part Australian.

I have also prepared a lecture-demonstration on theatrical use of masks using material from the performance, commissioned for the Bennelong Program of the Sydney Opera House.

Russell Cheek

Performance: 'Faces, Fakes & Falsehoods; 2 hours 20 mins. (including interval). Lecture-demonstration: Behind the Mask, 1 hour 15 mins. Workshops conducted in mime, mask and clown.
For further information contact: Anthony Steel and Associates, 153 Dowling St, Potts Point, 2011. Telephone: (02) 357 1200.



Punch' by Suzi De Clario, 1983

Harlequin mask in fibreglass by Suzi De Clario, 1983

MASKS have always held a fascination for me — everybody wears a live one — it's the soul's personality showing itself to the world!

I saw other people experimenting with plaster bandage, moulding simple masks straight from faces and I did that for a while. People enjoyed them so much, but were disappointed when they fell apart. So I learnt to duplicate these with fibreglass and obtained a much finer and more durable result. Although glass and resin are unpleasant materials to work with, the process of creating the shell-fine, sensuously smooth, finished form's is so exciting that I hardly notice.

The most absorbing and delightful stage in the creation of a mask is the application of facial decoration or make-up — the paint, feathers, flowers and so forth. Each one seems to call for a different personality to be expressed, although the basic face I use is always the same — from the same mould. It is a face expressing both male and female characteristics and those of the five races. Sometimes it even seems extra-terrestrial.

Starting with a plaster-bandage form taken straight from my own face, I build up a smooth plaster finish, emphasising and changing the features to become this androgynous face which transcends racial differences. By covering it in layers of latex, strengthened by gauze, I make a mould in which I paint a couple of thin layers of polyester resin and woven glass. This is the final mask which, upon drying, is removed. The edges are then filed and the surface sanded; it is then ready for the delicate application of paint.

Suzi De Clario

Androgynous mask with headdress by Suzi De Clario, 1983

OLIVER STREWE

Mario Gonzales wearing the Brighella mask created for Goldoni e le sue Dodici Commedia Nuove, *by Paulo Ferrari, 1957*

Below: Basle-style mask, 1980

DAVID JOHNS

Wooden half-mask by Ida Bagus Anom (Bali), 1982

Antonio Battistella wearing a pantaloon mask, 1950

Harleguin half-mask worn by Mario Gonzales

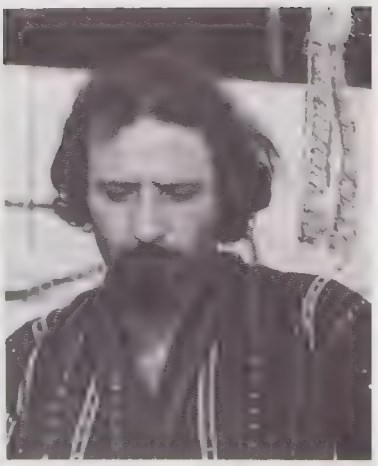
BEYOND THE MASK

MASKS, masks and more masks. A lot has already been said, but perhaps the fundamental question has still to be posed: their function in mass-media society. Is their universe of personalities, their capacity to personify every shade of human character still relevant? Originally the *masque* was a system of classifying human-traits into well-identified characters, a gallery of subtle psychic tonalities modelled in leather, papier-mache or wood, that told the stories of real living subjects. Every mask had once been someone's face and was delegated a kind of right to represent the virtues and vices of real people. Spectators came to see themselves and the local human bestiary. Behind the mask man took courage in depicting himself and his neighbours as they really were. Perhaps the mask exaggerated, multiplied, or transformed these figures drawn from the local environment, but these "false faces" were indeed recognisable and in reality became psychological tools, a means of introspection. But this common humus of experience has changed. Man has changed it, or he is capable of changing it, becoming master of his own social identity.

Behind the mask of today, an entire community acts out its drama. The individual countenance of the mask is literally blown to bits under the pressure of the crowd. The new awareness of one's environment, and of how every individual life is immersed in it, is the dynamic factor. The psychology of city life, the character of the small town, new social organisms: these are the new protagonists. The individual mask no longer has meaning. The face to interpret, to mask, is that of the place where people live every day side by side, their work, frustrations, last fond hopes. What does the new mask consist of? It's a *struttura gestuale* (gestural structures), a framework of art techniques (laser, computerised music, painting, sculpture) in concert with one basic purpose: to excite creative potentiality, to trigger off the gusto of the gathering, its response to its social reality, its own fantasy.

The seminar is a delicate moment where working people, young people, local artists and other cultural operators attempt to knot a new inter-relationship through the mutual exchange of ideas with the Centre for Masks and Gestural Structures. The Centre's staff acts as catalyst, animator and organising agent of the entire creative process, giving impulse to the discussion, direction to the group's research efforts, making available its own experiences, fusing mutual stimulation into collaboration so that the end result is a real synthesis of everybody's contribution.

Art for the Centre for Masks and Gestural Structures is the study of local reality. The framework for this kind of artistic production can function only if it



Donato Sartori

Donato Sartori in his workshop at Abano Terme, Italy

Urban involvement in Piazza San Marco in Venice during the performance of 'Environmental Adaptation, 1980

Below: Audience participation during the evening performance of 'Environmental Adaptations', Biennale of Venice, 1980

undergoes constant adaptation to the singular circumstances and customs of the various localities and people it works with, committing itself to an uninterupted process of self-analysis.

This kind of art never attempts to create its own public: the community is not only its stage but also its protagonist. For instance, at Mirano, a town in the Venice hinterland, suffocated in the poisonous fumes of a super-concentrated industrialisation, the mask that emerges from the common fantasy of the local people is an anti-gas mask. The performance, featuring a mutilated leather dummy with its dangling anti-gas mask, is the simple re-living of daily anxiety tranposed in art, the drama of everyday life. of the rude expropriation of the urban order which originally modelled the town's growth. Or Mexico City in 1978 where the crowd exploded into fiesta, expressing in ritual reflex, vivid colour and dance. People in fact can be very enthusiastic about art. But only if it comprehends and speaks to their condition.

No Centre performance is born from chance, nor to serve the cause of some refined aesthetic principle. And it never pretends to have achieved a finished reproducible product. This is simply because the performance doesn't exist in itself. It issues from a way of thinking where art is no longer conceived as a finished product but rather as a support, a framework, to populate with meaning and which constantly demands a precise function. Intuition, however imaginative, insists that we learn to use our senses with humility and purposefulness. Art for art's sake is out along with inanimate art. In their place: an art to live by.

This art may even be a plastic spiderweb capturing conventional space and forcing it to surprise, as in Venice in Piazza San Marco, in February of 1980 in an overflowing instinctive crowd participation. Out of this Venice experience conducted in the atmosphere, of the 1980 Biennale, an intense tourney activity was developed that took the Centre for Masks and Gestural Structures in the following months to Genova, Pavia, Milano, Napoli, Padova Trieste, San Marino, and Bologna. On the wave of this operation (called 'Workshop and Environment') students and operators in the field of the visual arts at the Accademia di Venezia formed a group with the same name and participated in the organisation and realisation of the entire tourney together with the Centre. On the basis of this experience the group has continued to collaborate with the activities of the Paduan group. As pointed out above, the new *masque* is above all an interdisciplinary mosaic and not something in itself: theatre is not enough, sculpture neither. Nor even music alone. Nor any other isolated artistic discipline. Art explores its own collectivity abandoning the caverns of the individual. Its realm is, first of all, a semantic possiblity: language says "art" and refers to something general held in common that runs beneath the surface uniting its diverse forms. What is the common denominator? One of the basic affirmations of interdisciplinary research is here: the necessity to define, through successive approximation, this common substratum.

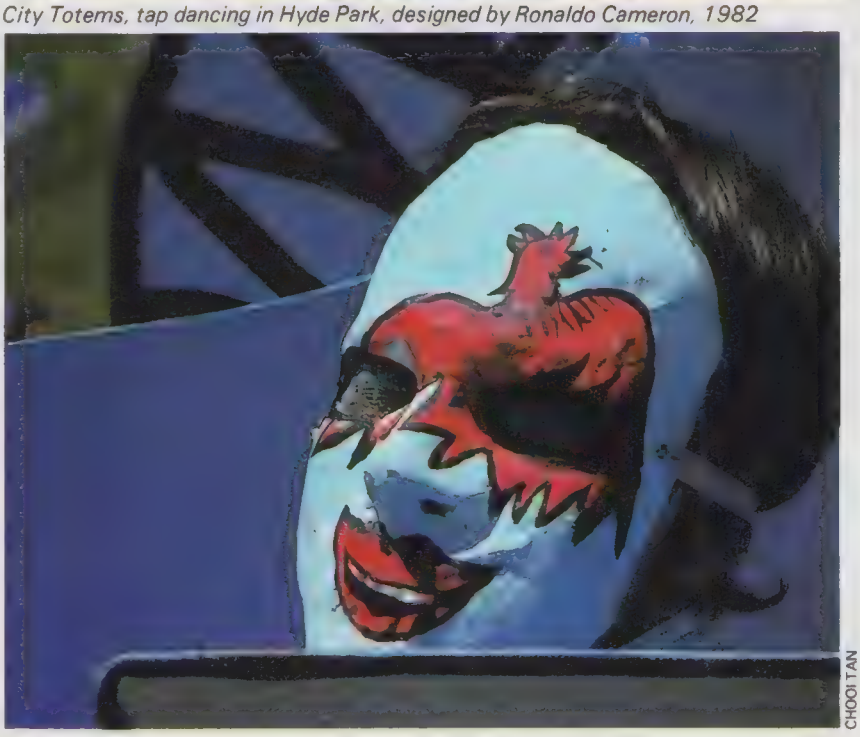
Beyond the leather mask, the actor loses himself in *everybody*. The new mask is an artistic omnibus with a symbolic power to change things: first of all our way of seeing them; the perception of our own reality, the perception of the limits of the place and role assigned to each one of us on society's class scale (certainly not of our own choosing), may perhaps mark the beginning of an exploration and analysis of this role and the recovery of the practicality of the symbol and of art itself.

Donato Sartori

Reprinted from *The Commedia dell'Arte and the Masks of Amleto and Donato Sartori* with the permission of *Centro Maschere e Structture Gestuali*, Turin, Italy.

John Lang's head by Suzanne Holman, Festival of Sydney, 1982. Photographs by courtesy of Crafts Council of New South Wales

City Totems, tap dancing in Hyde Park, designed by Ronaldo Cameron, 1982



Community mask in papier mache, Festival of Sydney, 1982

THE ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTILES OF ANNEMIEKE MEIN

'Encouragement of environmental awareness and the appreciation and preservation of our natural heritage is, I believe, one of the most important needs of our time.'

– Annemieke Mein

Sawflies hatching from their subterranean cocoons; textile sculpture in high relief using silk, satin, cotton and wool, 95 x 130 cm. Opposite page: Mating damselflies in tandem flight; one of three wall panels in low relief from 'Above the Channels', 90 x 90 cm. Photographs by Annemieke Mein.

ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTILES OF ANNEMIEKE MEIN

The female potter wasp carrying the final daub of mud to seal the casing for her egg; a high relief wall sculpture (detail) using raw cotton, silk organza, glittering stockings, raw wool, dacron wadding and sewing threads

Below: 'The Fallen Red Gum Log', 1982; a free-standing textile sculpture using silk organza, wool, dacron filling, sewing threads and covered wire. 88 x 42 x 18 cm

'Superb Blue Wrens'; a low relief wall work, 140 x 120 cm

NO article on the work of Annemieke Mein would be comprehensive without some mention of her personal philosophy, her aspirations and her living environment. It would be impossible to convey the beauty and the sources of inspiration behind the work without some reference to the artist herself.

Annemieke Mein is a professional textile sculptor, devoting herself professionally to full-time work with fibre. The result is an intricate graphic and textural portrayal of the floral and fauna that abounds in and around her living environment. The imagery is strong and emotional, visually commanding and executed with skill and precision.

Her most recently exhibited works at the Sale Regional Art Gallery in mid 1982 showed a natural progression from earlier low relief and high relief wall works to free standing sculpture, though currently she is again working on flat wall works, showing very little relief but putting a lot more emphasis on the layout and composition of the work.

The subjects portrayed in her work are the result of her keen observation of nature, detailed sketches and anatomical studies, and many hours of machine and hand sewing. The overriding theme of the work is the beauty of nature; a beauty that is often unseen by the casual observer.

Her life and work are inexorably bound together, for it is her life-long love and appreciation of nature and her concern for environmental preservation that is the inspiration behind each of her meticulously created works of art.

Annemieke is an artist who has strong personal beliefs and characteristics that combine to provide the stimulus and discipline necessary to create such evocative and labour intensive work. She has been called Australia's most innovative wildlife artist, and to have achieved this professional status and artistic recognition a number of varying but complementary factors have combined in her life.

'I have always believed that life is a series of events that form a sequential pattern with one thing leading onto another. In retrospect you can see a lot of seemingly unrelated incidents come together. Looking back I can identify all the major events in my life that led me to what has now become my full-time profession.

Since my early childhood I have enjoyed drawing, and as a child I drew prolifically. I never received any formal art training but taught myself by constant application. At an early age I also developed a keen and appreciative eye for the beauty of nature. I can recall this love of nature developing into a sense of wonderment and excitement when I arrived in Australia, aged seven, from my native Holland, and was introduced to the wealth of insect life and unfamiliar flora and fauna.

After the ordered parks of urban Holland, even the average back yard in Australia was full of interest and enchantment. I always appreciated what I call "the hidden" life and activity in the complex and structured world of nature; the delicate pattern of the spiders web, the drop of dew on a textured leaf, the industry of ants and so forth — all of which is commonly unseen and unappreciated by those who are oblivious

'My work is not intended to be absolutely correct in every anatomical detail. I design my work with the motive of creating a strong visual impact ... to stimulate awareness in the viewer through relief, texture, atmosphere and recognition.'

Photography by Annemieke Mein

Pink Emperor Gum Moth', 1982; a free-standing textile sculpture, 60 x 50 x 13 cm. Purchased by the Ararat Gallery 1982

'Emerald Moth on Banksia', textile sculpture (detail), 1982; 95 x 35 x 25 cm

ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTILES OF ANNEMIEKE MEIN

'The colours I use are not always totally related to the specimens depicted. I take liberties with tonal variation to suit the mood I am trying to create in the overall composition ... favouring the muted and earthy colours of the Australian bush ...'

to the beauty of this fascinating world. As a child I created games for myself such as "how many living things I could find on the branch of a tree." Being an only child I was inspired to create fulfilling singular activities for myself.

The next significant event that has had an ongoing influence on my life was the gift of a sewing machine for my eighteenth birthday. I learnt to sew, and concurrently learnt to appreciate the texture and variety of available fabrics. Already two factors that would steer me towards my profession had entered my life; my drawing and my sewing machine. Also I cannot dismiss the effect of my nursing career on my profession. I learnt not to be squeamish and this has stood me in good stead when I dissect insects for anatomical studies to support my designs. The major drawing together of all these factors was when I moved with my family from Melbourne to East Gippsland.'

Annemieke Mein lives in East Gippsland in the rural city of Sale. She has lived in this area since 1971 and all her textile works have been stimulated by the abundance of flora and fauna in the region. East Gippsland is rich in its diversity of flora and fauna and extreme variation in natural habitats. The region covers about one sixth of Victoria and incorporates

'The Sacred Kingfisher', low relief panel from 'Above the Channels'

'The Channels Gorge', centre panel from 'Above the Channels'

snowy high plains, forests, grasslands, inland lakes, swamps and coastal area and is blessed with an abundance of creeks and rivers. It is here that Annemieke finds the creatures, the settings and the inspiration for her work. She has successfully fused family activities with her absorbing interest in nature and her family regularly accompany her on her field trips. The field trips encompass long bush walks, collecting specimens, taking notes and photographs and the sharing of an experience together in appreciating the beauty of nature and understanding the ecological balance.

'My applique and machine embroideries are the result of my involvement with the natural world which surrounds me in East Gippsland. The revelation of the environment as I see it is the key to my work. The immediate environment is the stimulus for my work. Through my work I hope I can inspire people to take a penetrating look at nature and see all the natural beauty that surrounds them. In each piece I try to state my concern and appreciation for the environment. Encouragement of environmental awareness and the appreciation and preservation of our natural heritage is, I believe, one of the most important needs of our time. The survival of native wildlife is one of my primary concerns. There is beauty all around us if we know "how" to look. Within a private back yard or any urban environment, wherever there is soil and vegetation, there is life. Through my work I have learnt to appreciate the intricate beauty of this microscopic world, and find boundless sources of wonder and inspiration in the patterns and movements of its tiny inhabitants.

My work is not intended to be absolutely correct in every anatomical detail. I design my work with the motive of creating a strong visual impact. I aspire to stimulate awareness in the viewer through relief, texture, atmosphere and recognition.

Detail from 'Superb Blue Wrens'

'My fabric collection is much treasured, and consists mainly of natural materials such as cotton, wool and silk. I use such materials as fur and synthetics when their individual texture or colour will enhance a piece.'

'Silvereyes', low relief panel, 1983. Photograph by Reflections Photography

ENVIRONMENTAL TEXTILES OF ANNEMIEKE MEIN

'Mythical Moth', 1983. Photograph by Reflections Photography

'Case Moth Coccons', free-standing sculptures, 1982; two pieces, each 62 x 15 x 9 cm. Materials used: silk, cotton, satin, taffeta, suede, dacron and wool filling, and sewing threads.

The colours I use are not always totally related to the specimens depicted. I take liberties with tonal variation to suit the mood I am trying to create in the overall composition. I favour the muted and earthy colours of the Australian bush, using small patches of bright colour to emphasise a particular point of the design. My fabric collection is much treasured, and consists mainly of natural material such as cotton, wool and silk. I use such materials as fur and synthetics when their individual texture or colour will enhance a piece. All the materials are chosen for their colour, texture, durability, credibility and aesthetic appearance in relation to their use and subject matter.

Working to a strict and demanding timetable, Annemieke usually has a specimen by her side as a reference as she uses the machine or hand sews the work. She has mastered a variety of techinques including over-laying colour grading, quilting, tranpanto, patch and applique. She has also developed a variety of methods in the application of these techniques. Dimensions and relief in the work is achieved by moulding with steam, starch, wire tension sewing, dying, painting, printing, stencilling and bleaching back. Such is her skill in working with fabric that she can create life-like illusions of such subtle images as reflection and shade. Through the selection of fabrics and the methods employed in the sewing, Annemieke is able to create works of art that capture the subtle nuances of nature usually unseen by the human eyes. A casual observer of her work would not be able to see or appreciate the detail and skillful sewing involved in each piece. It is only after careful observation that one can appreciate the skill, the labour and the research that has gone into each finished sculpture.

Annemieke keeps detailed notes on the various stages involved in creating each piece, carefully documenting the techinques used, the sequence of sewing methods being applied to each stage of the composition, and naturalist notes on what foliage or insects are depicted, their habitats and even what stage of the life-cycle is being portrayed.

The work of Annemieke Mein is unique in concept, design and execution. She has rightfully gained national and international recognition and respect from art and craft organisations and individuals and is doing much to heighten public awareness of Australia's natural heirtage.

'If through my work I can contribute to the preservation of our wildlife and an understanding of the delicate ecological balance of Nature, then I am fulfilled'.

Maria Prendergast

Maria Prendergast is a professional journalist and Editor of *House and Garden*, Melbourne.

Annemieke Mein was the first Hoechst Textile Award winner in 1980. This was a special inaugural presentation to commemorate the centenary celebration exhibition at the official opening of the Meat Market Crafts Centre, Melbourne.

The Crafts Board of the Australia Council is very pleased to be associated with the presentation of the exhibition 'International Directions in Glass Art'. *The Crafts Board, which has an Australia wide funding and advisory responsibility, acknowledges the generous sponsorship and assistance of Australian Consolidated Industries Limited, and its operating units, Pilkington-ACI Limited, Australian Fibreglass Pty Ltd, Crown Corning Limited, and ACI Glass Packaging, without whom an exhibition of these dimensions would not have been possible.*

This project was conceived late in 1979. It arose from a concern to promote the development of glass in Australia, and in part it was felt this could be achieved by touring an exhibition of quality work drawn from around the world. Mr. Michael Esson was appointed as selector, and his overseas training, personal contact with the American glass school, and current teaching responsibilities in Australia have fitted him for this role.

'International Directions in Glass Art' *demonstrates the explosion of new idea and technical skills which have characterised the rapid development of the glass movement in recent years. The Crafts Board believes this important exhibition will act as a stimulus to excite Australians, both practitioners and the public, about the potential of glass as a medium for artistic expression. It is hoped that because this is a time of many new masters and no definite schools or styles, that Australians will be encouraged to explore and expand their own works in individual directions.*

Cedar Prest
Chairperson, Crafts Board

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTIONS IN GLASS ART

Photography by Leon Bird

Sidney R. Hutter, 'Plate Glass Vase #39'. Plate glass, cut, polished and laminated: 392 x 187 x 187

THE opportunities for Australians to see in their own country the work of major glass artists has been rare, a surprising fact considering the enthusiastic response to the few historical and contemporary glass shows which have been seen here.

The developing studio glass movement in Australia provided the stimulus to bring the exhibition 'International Directions in Glass Art' together in Australia.

The exhibition offered to artists working with glass the opportunity to experience at first hand the work of some of the most influential artists in the field. To general audiences, the exhibition opened many new pathways to the understanding of a familiar, yet narrowly perceived, material. The pluralism which the exhibition demonstrated should be seen as an expression of the wide options available to anyone working in the medium, rather than an object-lesson to Australian artists and their public on what glass should be.

All measurements in millimetres: height/width/depth

Gianni Toso, 'Acher', 1980. Glass mask, mould-blown and hand finished: 450 x 250 x 120

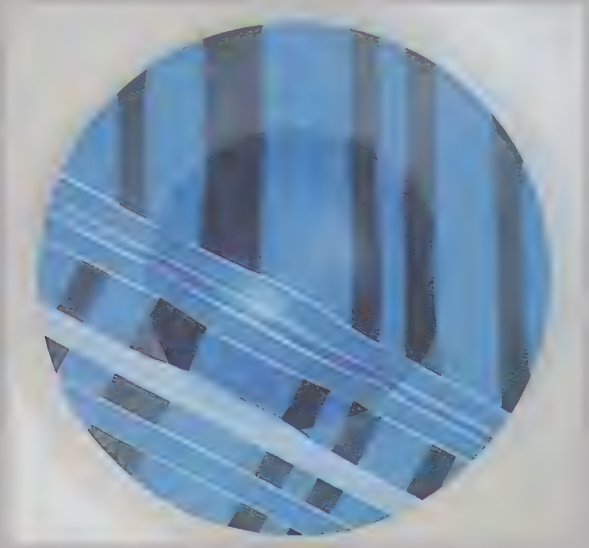
Dana Zámečniková, 'Going for a Walk, 1981. Sheet glass, sandblasted, enamelled and engraved: 250 x 380 x 50

Tom Fleming, 'SC11', 1981. Sculpture in laminated and fused glass, [illegible] adhesive: 228 x 1219 x 559

Akio Aso, 'Sculptured Puzzle V'. Cast glass, marble and Palaeozoic slate. 419 x 327 x 304

Margie Jones and Susie Krichevsky, 'Folded Silhouettes in Plotted Extreme Light', 1982. Fused, laminated glass. Blue section: 419 x 209 x 114. Violet section: 342 x 190 x 108

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTIONS IN GLASS ART

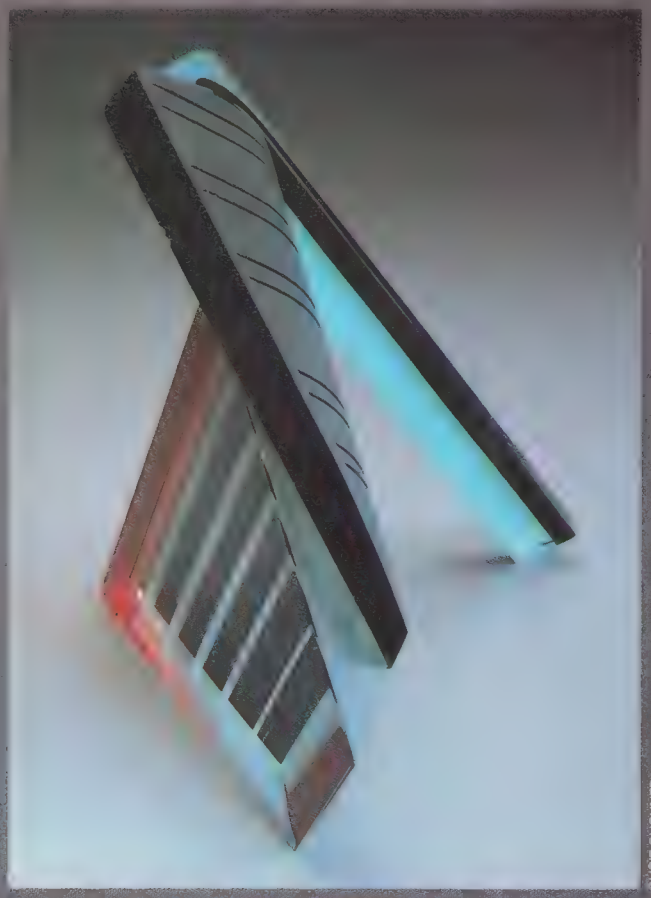


Klaus Moje, 'Its Blue, 1981'. Bowl in mosaic glass: 77 x 474 x 474

The exhibition was not conceived as a survey, rather a view of developments in glass art from some of its most influential areas. The works chosen also reflect a personal view, that of the selector Michael Esson, who was involved in the project from its inception. Working in the role of selector, in consultation with the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Michael Esson chose a varied selection of works which make us question preconceived ideas of how glass should look and feel. While the chosen works share a high degree of quality and craftsmanship, they each represent the artist's individuality within the sometimes insular world of glass.

As with any new form of expression, glass exposes itself to the danger of uncritical audiences. It is a physically seductive material, a factor which can obscure poor design, vacuous decorativeness or intellectual bankruptcy. Technical virtuosity alone can provide the basis for critical evaluation of a work, but it is insufficient if it does not occur in a context of design and intellectual meaning.

Kirk Trinkley, 'Green Cone/Pink Fence', 1981. Sculpture, [illegible] glass. 95 x 180 x 180



Mary Ann Scholz (artist), 1982. Sheet glass, fused, cut, ground, sandblasted and polished. 210 x 205

SUSIE CUSHNER

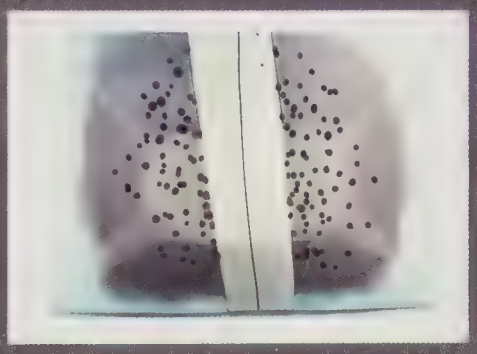
Harry J. Umen, 'Light Tag'. 1982. Wall construction [illegible] 170 x 940 x 270

The 57 works in the exhibition presented a variety of solutions to formal and technical problems as well as some sharp social commentary through the medium of glass.

The familiar form of the vessel is a basic shape in which to explore the potential of glass and several artists in the exhibition investigate this potential. John Clark's 'WVP' is a tour-de-force of glassblowing, resulting in an elongated column of air caught in a taut commanding form. Richard Marquis' 'Big Greys' also have this tautness and lightness, their bulbous forms being emphasised by absurdly small handle and neck details. Dale Chihuly's 'Maccia' group of blown latticino glass elegantly exploits the fluid qualities of glass.

Dan Dailey's 'Apex' is a complete contrast, interpreting this fluidity in a hard industrial glass context. It is a witty and hard piece, qualities underlined by a brilliant show of finishing techniques. A similar approach to technique is taken by Michael Glancy in 'Lapis Squared in Bean's Scale', where the scale of the work is reduced to emphasise the brilliant colour and gem-like

Robert Levin, 'Motion Series # 7'. Sculpture, blown and hot-tooled, cut and fabricated on glass base: 157 x 278 x 125



Makoto Ito, 'Plate', 1981. Slumped seven crystal sheet glass: 85 x 240 x 305

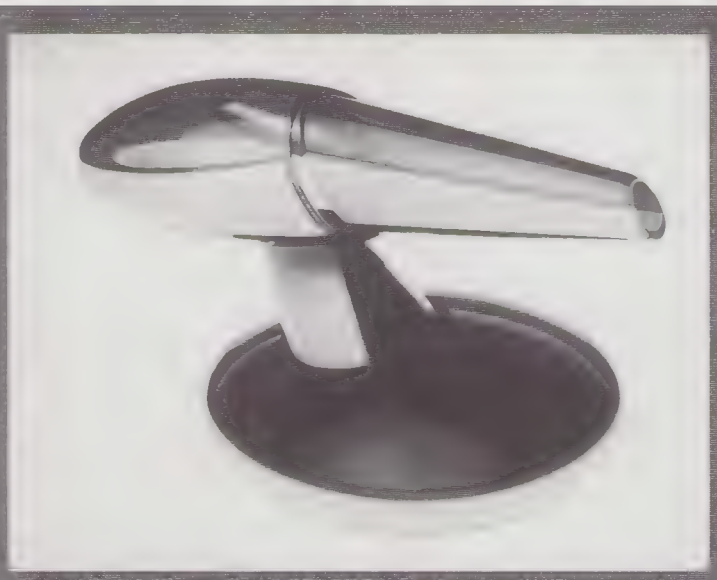
Ted Remes, 'This is My Saviour', 1980. Twelve portraits of Christ. Opaque glass, millefiore technique: 247 x 165 x 25

Clifford Rainey, 'Maia (Kanya) The Maquette', 1981. Maquette for a larger sculpture, glass, marble and wood. 356 x 356 x 356

Bill Kane, 'Oakland Scribble', 1980. Sculpture installation; glass, neon, photographic transparency on Plexiglas acrylic sheet: 1804 x 2236 x 508

qualities of the electroformed surface. The surface quality of coloured glass is further exploited by Klaus Moje and Joel Myers. Moje's 'Its Blue' uses an ancient mosaic glass technique to build up a modernist angular pattern on a traditional form. Its matte irregular surface denies any experience of glass' translucent qualities and yet intensifies the colour as no other material could. Similarly, Myers 'Contiguous Fragment' uses coloured shards of glass set into a dense matte black field of formal shape. The seemingly random shapes of intense colour have an inner glow and emphasise the almost archaeological jewel-like appeal of these intense abstract works.

The vessel form is used in a provocative work by Sidney Hutter, in which plate glass sheets are laminated into a spiralling traditional form, teasing the eye into believing one thing and seeing another. It is very much a glass work about glass, similar in intention to 'Folded Silhouettes in Painted Extreme Light' by Margie Jervis and Susie Krasnican. Again, what is seen and what exists are totally at odds, yet



Michael Cohn, 'Space Cup # 60', 1981. Sculpture, glass construction, blown, sagged and cut: 203 x 355 x 229

Dennis Elliott-Smith, 'Oedipus and The Sphinx', 1981. Wall panel: 914 x 686

Benjamin Kaiser, 'Interlocking Squares III', 1980. Sculpture, sheet glass and steel: 1524 x 1524 x 1524 square

Richard Marquis, 'Big Greys', 1980. Two teapot forms, blown glass: 915 x 610 x 610

the work is cohesive in its intention to talk of the effect of colour and light through glass.

Glass has always existed in a somewhat mysterious realm in the sense that its working techniques are far removed from everyday experience. Exploiting this technological mystery world is Thomas Patti, whose 'Bi-Axial Tubated Green Riser', small as it is, is a mastery of the artist's will over plate glass. Patti uses gas-expanded forming techniques to create a work in which astonishing precision and dramatic form fuse into a timeless whole. Michael Cohn's 'Space Cup 60' also occupies this mystery world although with considerably more flash. There are references to science fiction forms and technological equipment and colouration in this piece, yet its ultimate appeal is its wit and its perversely useless form.

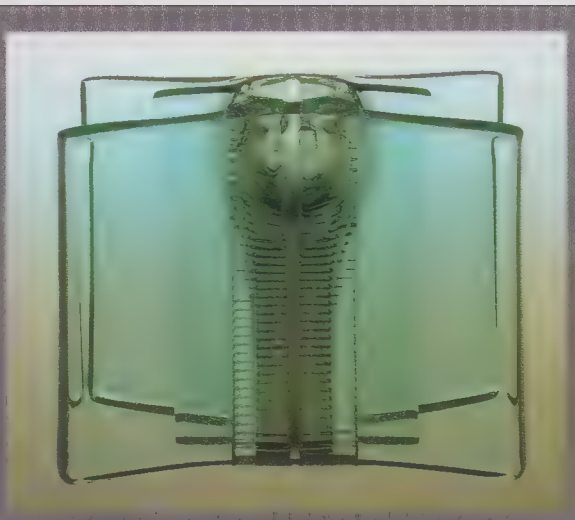
The physical properties of glass are apparent in the structure of works by Howard Ben Tré and Karla Trinkley. Ben Tré's monumental 'Column' alludes to an industrial archaeology, its corroded form still glowing from within, like a memory of some distant and forgotten function. Here glass is a living material, subject to decay and change, its shape formed by encircling bands of corroding copper, itself a material subject to change. In Trinkley's 'Green Cone — Pink Fence', the delicate crustiness of pâte-de-verre gives the bowl form an archaeological quality with the sproule-like outer structure providing a strong visual link to the cast construction of the work.

Moving even further away from the glamour of glass, Tom Fleming uses scrap glass, fused together into a dense horizontal form. Sandblasting softens the jagged edges and the harsh colours of the industrial glass he uses. The sarcophagus-like form is deliberately uneasy and unattractive, suggesting death and decay. Unlike new glass, it sucks in light and yet there is an element of regeneration present.

Figuratively and emotionally it is the densest work in the show, sharing the consoling optimism and spirit of another work 'Oakland Scribble' by Bill Kane.

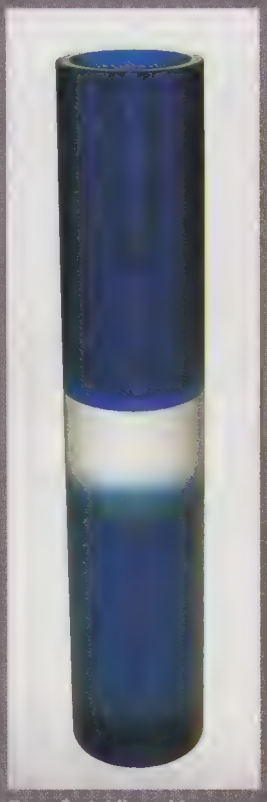
This work also refers to urban blight, superimposing two forms of urban visual pollution, the unapproved,

Joel Philip Myers, 'Contiguous Fragment', 1981: 228 x 77 x 77



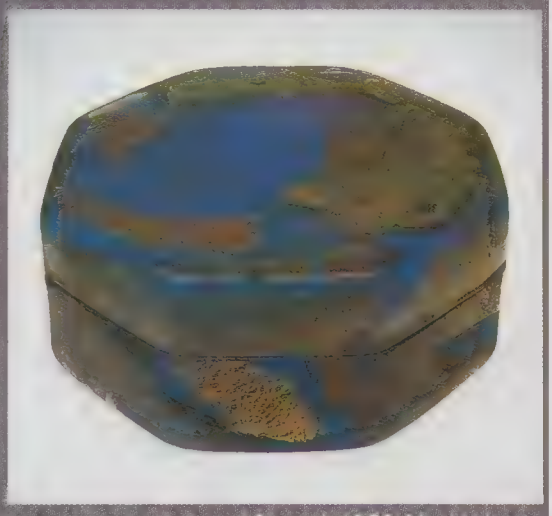
Thomas Patti, 'Bi-Axial Tubated Green Riser', 1980. Sculpture, gas-expanded plate glass. 116 x 152 x 101

Marvin Lipofsky, 'California Lines' (holding series), 1980. Broken blown glass, glass tubes: 203 x 1219



Frantisek Vizer, Vase, 1982. Cut glass: 465

Patti Dougherty, 'Remarxs-2', 1981. Mould blown [illegible]



Kyohei Fujita, 'Coloured Clouds', 1973. Mould blown casket with gold decoration: 110 x 250 x 250

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTIONS IN GLASS ART

Dale Chihuly, untitled group from the 'Macchia Series', 1982: 254 x 762 x 762

wall graffiti, and the acceptable, neon advertising. By transposing them, he creates from a casual scrawl a tense and energetic work, at once symbolic and anonymous. This harsh mark bleeds into the surrounding space and is omnipresent in the exhibition reflecting in all the surrounding glass, like the neon chips experienced when walking through a lighted city.

This aggressiveness of design is also felt in Susan Stinsmuehlen's 'Another Pretty Face X' where strident painted and coloured flat glass is assembled into a kite-like wall panel. She uses glass in a non-reverential way and her colour and pattern concepts are close to painting, but the hardness and brittleness of the material is emphasised by the garish orchestration of colour. While not about glass, this work extends its language. In the same way 'Cube Tag' and 'Light Tag' by Harry Umen are works which use glass as part of a complex assemblage of other materials. When lit, the glass' colour and translucency is the cohesive element in these jumbled and undefinable constructions. While fashionably "New-wave" they are fresh and

Howard Ben Tre, 'Column', 1981. Glass

Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, 'Cylinder in the Spheric Space', 1981. Cast and cut glass: 1200 x 300 x 800

Richard Craig Meitner, 'Prime Time 11', 1981. Three vessel forms, free blown, polished and

immediate and do not drown in a worship of the material.

The references to glass' historical connections with the church are also used by Ted Barnes in an intensely personal work entitled 'This Is My Saviour'. The ancient technique of millefiore is used to build up a dot-screen image of another, more elusive, religious reproduction; that of Christ's face from the Holy Shroud of Turin. The authenticity of that relic is further questioned in this icon by the use of the multiple image, in the manner of Andy Warhol's superstar portraits. Encased in an indestructible and artificially-aged bronze frame the object appears as a time-traveller with a secret waiting to be unlocked.

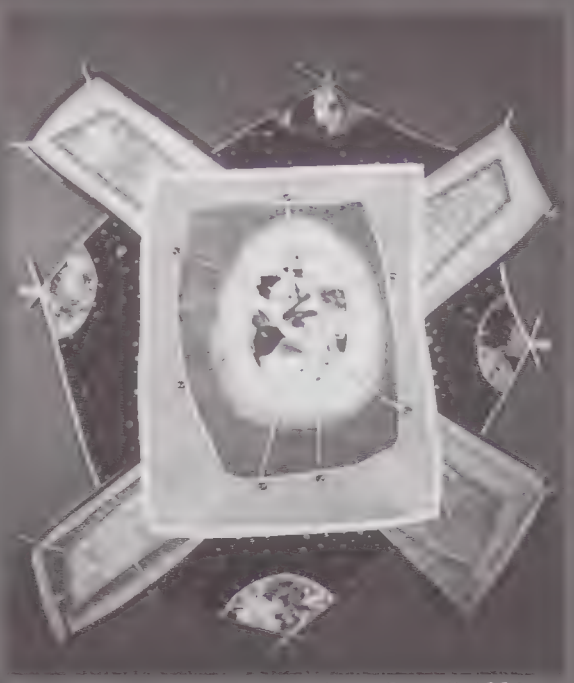
The human image appears in several other works by Clifford Rainey in 'Masai', and by Gianni Toso, whose latticino work 'Archer' offers the paradox of a transparent mask in the context of traditional Italian "commedia dell'arte". With almost magical properties, Dana Zamečníková's work 'Going For A Walk' operates on the memory of childhood, dreams and

Dan Dailey, 'Apex', 1982. Blown glass, Vitrolite and gold-plated brass: 297 x 395 x 251

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTIONS IN GLASS ART

Joey Kirkpatrick and Flora C. Mace, 'Nippon Doll', 1981

Michael M. Glancy, 'Lapis Squared in Bean's Scale', 1981. Vessel on base, blown glass and copper: 102 x 76 x 76



Susan Stinsmuehlen, 'Another Pretty Face X', 1981. Wall panel, glass, acrylic sheet, brass and jewels: 1025 x 940 x 10

Therman Statom, untitled sculpture, 1974. Plate and blown glass: 1828 x 3810 x 1090

Yan Zoritchak, 'Signed Cosmique', 1981. Sculpture, slumped optical glass, cut and polished: 200 x 70 x 200

Richard M. Bernstein, Vessel on base, 1981

windows into the past. With the simplest of means, paint on glass, she strikes a chord of the imagination that no holograph could match. The same European sense of the emotional impact of material and form is evident in Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtova's 'Two Hearts', a strong and romantic work operating on a subtle orchestration of colour and form.

The largest works in the exhibition use plate glass in its most direct way. De Wain Valentine's 'Open Diamond Double Diagonal' uses a single element-bands of plate glass, in a tight, formal exercise of transparency and reflection. As a work about glass it is elegant and understated to the point of invisibility from some viewing points. Its formal structure is in contrast to the loose theatricality of Therman Statom's untitled work of plate and blow glass, a playful gesture held in frozen motion by tension. The great (broken) glass work by Marcel Duchamp, 'The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even' is immediately evoked here and the work tantalises the spectator with its almost overwhelming sense of danger.

The danger from broken glass is much more contained in Ben Kaiser's 'Interlocking Squares III', where sheet glass strips are held in tension by cages of industrial steel mesh. The work has a spare, architectural form and uses the simplest of means to exploit the shimmer of light refracting from hundreds of broken edges. Like an energy collector, it is a passive, yet powerful work.

This sense of power resides in 'Signal Cosmique' a work of astonishing precision by Yan Zoritchak. Laminated optical glass is ground and polished to a prism-like form that refracts light and energy to an from its centre. It has the subtle drama and power of a magical object, yet is humanised by its ability to entrance the viewer with a sense of wonder that it is hand made.

This quality is the essence of the works in the exhibition, a mastery of the hand and mind over the most elusive and treacherous of materials.

Robert Bell

Curator of Craft — The Art Gallery of Western Australia

This supplement was produced with assistance from the Crafts Board of the Australia Council

Helmut Lueckenhausen

Photography by Clive Jeffery

MY training in industrial design left me imbued with the ideas and values of the "modern" or "international" style, still a great influence on architecutre and design. Despite a myriad of varied approaches this century, the strict and sometimes severe geometry of the Bauhaus, the great German school of art and design of the 1920s, is still a major influence on design teaching and designers. Various factors and changes in my attitude, however, caused me to drift away from these principles.

My training gave me a minimal geometric approach to design. Decoration or flights of fancy were to be avoided. One designed objects to be produced simply and cheaply. I came to reject this, as strict adherence to any supposed absolute truth spells disaster for creativity.

I stopped freelance furniture designing because I wanted freedom to design and make what I wanted to. I wanted to be associated with the finished product, to be able to stand back and say — 'This is mine'. I could not do this with mass-produced products.

My pieces grew from extensive research into natural forms, specifically, seed pods and seeding fruits. I was developing a program of study into design sources for my students as the first step in developing problem-

Functional wood-crafted containers based upon organic forms

Lidded three-legged container, huon pine

Organically shaped receptacles with winged lids

Pod-shaped box with four animal-shaped limbs

Wooden containers combining seedpod forms with "creature-like" animation

solving methods. Seed pods are the examples I chose because they have an immediate and physical relationship to the material I wanted to use — wood.

Close study of the design continuum in natural form is, I believe, one way of gaining first-hand knowledge of the principles of structure and form. There are precedents to all human-made structures in nature. Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome is a good example — it has an exact and detailed precedent in the skeletal structure of a microscopic sea creature. The point is, to tap the information at its source and then develop it in new and individual ways.

Recently my work has begun to take on a "creature-like" animation. This element is more developmental than pre-planned. The pieces do not resemble any known life forms, but they do seem to have an underlying personality. The choice of wood is an obvious extension of the link with a natural source but, like seed pods, is only one of many possibilities. Also, it is a low technology material, readily worked by an individual and appreciated by most.

I am not really comfortable with the religious approach to timber expressed by some "woody" people. I choose to direct form and the material must follow. Similarly, form does not follow function in my opinion, because any number of forms can fulfill a function and a choice still has to be made.

Aesthetics, "visual comfort", is also part of function and in my opinion an ugly, comfortable chair is as abhorrent to my living environment as a beautiful, uncomfortable one.

Historically, furniture, crafts, and decorative, applied and fine arts were a living extension of the values of the society in which they were created. Judgment of them was made in cultural, social, emotional and religious or "spiritual" terms. For this reason no simple or all-pervading standard of beauty can exist.

If increased diversity, steeped in a traditon of craftsmanship, can be seen as one of the successors of the 20th century or international style, with its conformity of goals and method, then that may also be my aim.

Helmut Lueckenhausen

Three-legged bowl with lip and tail

Chest of three drawers

Chris McElhinny and David Upfill-Brown

SHARING a workshop at Cuppacumbalong Art and Craft Centre near Canberra are two designer craftsmen in wood, David Upfill-Brown and Chris McElhinney. Both graduated from the John Makepeace School for Craftsmen in Wood, Dorset, England, in July 1981, which is where they met. Both share a love of timber and an enthusiasm for their craft but their diverse backgrounds give each a distinctive approach.

David Upfill-Brown, a political refugee from Southern Africa, moved to Britain in 1976. He had been a sculptor for ten years but although he exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, he found it difficult to make a living. He turned to furniture making, which he had been doing before, but felt that he did not know enough about the craft.

'I came to woodworking through sculpture. The first tool I used was an adze and I treated it from a carving point of view.'

So on hearing about the John Makepeace School David applied and started in 1979.

Chris McElhinney was a self-taught hobbyist living in Canberra. Disenchanted with the physics degree he was doing and inspired by *A Cabinet Makers Notebook,* by Swedish designer James Krenov, he decided to seek training, but he found it difficult to obtain. The technical colleges he looked at did not cater for the sort of thing he was interested in. Most courses in cabinet making, for example, turned out to be technically oriented and designed to train wood machinists for employment in industry. Finally, after obtaining a list of available courses, Chris applied to the John Makepeace School.

Chris and David agree that the school was an exciting learning experience. Chris says, 'Categorically, there is no place like Parnham. There are visiting experts each week ... someone who's famous for a particular chair ... a renowned industrial designer ... a famous abstract artist trying to get your colour sense a bit more turned on. It is just such a broad education ... And it was the design experience that was really important at Parnham.'

'I have a great debt to the school,' says David. 'I mean a financial debt as well as from what I learnt there. It was 8,000 pounds for the course when I did it. It's gone up considerably since then. I used to think it was horrifically expensive; as reality strikes home, having left an institution like that, it wasn't expensive at all.'

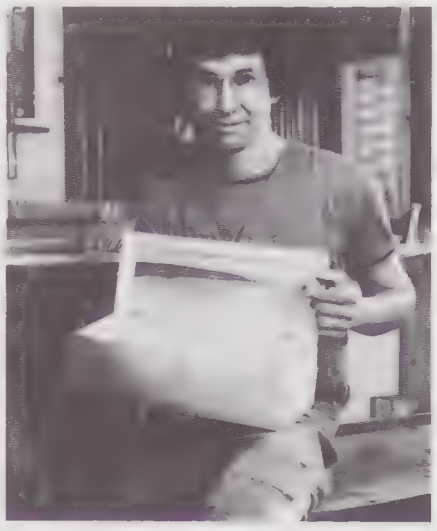
The Crafts Board and the Silver Jubilee Trust gave Chris a grant for the two years he was studying, and on his return to Australia the Crafts Board gave him a further grant to set up his workshop.

'Traditionally in workshops apprentices instead of machines were used for carrying out repetitive or bulk tasks, but today this system is no longer viable,' says Chris. 'It's a Catch-22 situation — if you haven't got certain machines it takes too long to get past the early stages: a week to do something by hand that a machine would take fifteen minutes to do. There is no justification for doing those processes by hand. Hand skills are most valuable when applied to fine work that machines just can't match at all.'

Chris finds buying quality hand tools a problem and maintains that most contemporary tools are made from steel that has not been properly tempered, and is therefore too soft. The tools that he really treasures are all second hand.

David's move to Australia was a considered one. Having been brought up in the southern-hemisphere he was attracted by the lifestyle and climate which he says is similar to that of South Africa; and from his own research he felt there was a much more lively crafts environment in Australia.

'There is certainly a lot of interest and also a lot of official backing in Australia which I didn't find in Britain.'



Chris McElhinny with the presentation box he made for Their Excellencies, Sir Zelman and Lady Cowen from the people of Canberra.

Chris's main interest is furniture. He likes to visit his client's house and see the area he is designing for. Chris could not see himself making non-functional items.

'If you come to someone like myself then you are getting a piece of furniture designed especially with the function in mind. There is always a danger that you can make things almost too well, so that they become something you stand back and admire but do not live with. It's difficult at the moment because I tend to put everything I've got into making a piece of furniture and as a result it does tend to become a bit precious.'

David, on the other hand, is prepared to take on anything that looks interesting, including stairs, windows and doors.

In spite of their differing attitudes and practical methods of working, Chris says they get on well in their professional partnership.

'We like the same workshop set up, we have the same approach to the standards at which we work, and we share the same respect for quality tools and machines, and the need for proper maintenance. But in terms of the furniture we make, we couldn't be further apart. I think it's really healthy. It is never a "patting each other on the back" situation, in fact it's always aggressive.'

David summed up their differences as being one of "line" as opposed to "curve" Whereas Chris's designs are very linear and utilise the design possibilities of the structure in terms of its jointing systems, David's designs are more rounded and shaped.

These design differences impose on each of them a different attitude to finishing. Chris likes to finish with a hand-cutting tool, avoiding the use of sandpaper, but he admits that this is not always possible because of the hardness or grain characteristics of some Australian woods.

David respects his partner's methods but in referring to his own work he says, 'A lot of shaped work needs to be finished with abrasives as opposed to cutting tools. I very much appreciate Chris's point of view for finishing from a cutting tool, rather than from an abrasive, because I see that it makes sense economically: a well planed surface and there is no work thereafter. If you're working at one hundred per cent efficiency it makes sense.'

Chris prefers to finish the wood with teak oil rather than lacquer. He feels this gives the wood greater depth and would only use lacquer for surfaces that have to be resistant, such as table tops. He dismisses the use of French polish on any of his pieces, maintaining that 'French polishing is great if you want to put your furniture in a museum'.

This attitude is exemplified even more by David, who is interested in lamination processes. He says, 'Because of our modern life styles I feel we have to finish with modern materials designed to cope with heat, ultra violet radiation and so on. I'm not chary of using lacquers at all, in fact I find some of them enhance the wood a

Photography by David Reid

Oak dining table with six chairs by Chris McElhinny

great deal. They also have the property, when carefully used, of not varying with age and of not allowing dirt into an open pored surface. This means you maintain a colour, and as I like mixing woods the holding of grain pigments is an important consideration.'

Wood inlays are of growing interest to Chris who has already produced a number of inlay pieces. He says that his work in this area has been based on rather simple, but well executed designs and points out that, 'If you look at a lot of antique inlay closely then it's not very good in terms of crispness of result. There are big glue lines where the sections haven't quite fitted, but if you stand back it's very impressive because there is so much of it.'

Some of the jobs David has lined up also involve some inlay work. He has worked with semi-precious materials, such as ivory, using them as inlay escutcheons on drawer fronts. He thinks mother-of-pearl has a lot of potential for inlay.

'Two or three hundred years ago, when crafts reigned supreme, the people who did these things were specialists. It's rather like wood turning which people often ask us about. Now I maintain that a person who turns wood all day, every day, is a "wood turner" and I don't think there are too many of them.'

David and Chris are constantly experimenting with Australian woods. David is interested in some of the more tropical hardwoods and would like to hear of other people's experiences with these woods. He thinks mountain ash is an underrated material and sees it as having enormous potential for laminating. Its light colour, too, he sees as being more in tune with modern tastes.

Chris has been milling much of his own timber.

'It's really exciting because they're very beautiful. I've got casuarina from the Cotter, fifteen minutes away from here; I've got casuarina from the coast, a slightly different one; banksias from the coast; and a very un-Australian wood, one of the elms outside my workshop fell down so I milled it on the spot. I found a Lebanon cedar at the Belconnen rubbish tip. It will have a new life, hopefully, as a drawer bottom.'

Chris thinks that he will find no real problems with these woods in terms of durability but says, 'The real problem is with stability. If you're making a cabinet you need wood that will not move too much once it's seasoned. It might be that some of them are a bit too unstable but most of them are so dense that I don't think we've got a problem at all.'

'Attitudes to wood, I think, need a complete reappreciation,' says David. 'There is an overkill attitude in Australia. A point of view which still sees timber as an endless resource, which of course it's not. It is a renewable one and one of the few basic resources which are. It would be encouraging to see renewable hardwoods such as oaks, ash, cedar, the better eucalypts and huon pine (which is unviable as a renewable resource because of its age), being planted. I lived in a limited forestry area in South Africa and they appreciated the need to renew hardwoods. They are replanting trees which take 2,500 years to mature: the stinkwood tree, octea bulata. It may seem very futile to generations today, but that's the sort of attitude which needs to be nurtured.'

David agrees with Chris that if you appreciate timber the best thing to do is to mill your own.

'It seems to me from the little timber buying I've done since I've been here, that it is very difficult to buy two boards from the same tree. Now, it's all sawn into different lengths and shipped all over the country. Obviously this is the way industry does things, but for someone at the other end of the scale looking for decent stuff, it's not easy to find. Some of the raised eyebrows I've experienced when I've gone to a timber yard and tried to look underneath the top board!'

Chris likes some of the more traditional woods such as rosewood and walnut, but thinks timber such as mahogany and cedar is overrated.

'Mahogany is really soft and spongy. If you look at antique furniture a lot of it is made of mahogany because it's easy to work.'

On the subject of antiques, both of them agree that in Britain there is a lot of competition from the antique market, which is absent here in Australia. David says of Britain, 'Our great competition was antique pieces. In Australia there isn't a vast antique heritage. I know the antique market is probably quite inflated because of the rarity of antiques, but there certainly isn't the following, as there is in Britain, to furnish your house with antiques as soon as one comes into a bit of money. Here people's houses are furnished in a completely different way, more sense of light and space, and very much more potential for modern design, which is what we are all about.'

Chris is more critical of the discriminate purchasing and copying of antiques.

'It bothers me a lot because people associate something being old with it being quality and the two don't necessarily relate

Chaise lounge upholstered in cordoroy, David Upfill-Brown

David Upfill-Brown checking smoothness of wood

Wall cupboard by C. McE

Bowl by David Upfill-Brown

Three chairs from dining set by David Upfill-Brown

Table by Chris McElhinny

at all. I can see no point at all in reproductions because those pieces of furniture were designed to be modern pieces in the 17th century.'

The establishment period of a workshop is always a difficult time. Chris and David feel the frustration of having time split between buying machinery, building up wood stocks and teaching to support themselves.

David is teaching at Bruce TAFE for two months. It is a rather unusual teaching situation.

'I am making an item of furniture in the college as a teaching aid. It is for a collection that has been left to the college. They are making a video of it at the same time, so that what I may be passing over in skills and design appreciation will be available to more than just the few that were there at the time. I think it is a very worthwhile experiment and very rare.'

Chris and David already have a number of commissions. Chris estimates that he has two to three years' work. He recently finished a casket in huon pine, a present for the retiring Governor-General, Sir Zelman Cowen. The casket was commissioned by the Minister for the Capital Territory, Mr. Hodgman, on behalf of the people of Canberra. Currently he is working on a wardrobe. After that there is a dining table and six chairs, several chess tables, a special speaker's chair and lectern for a school and a boardroom table to seat sixteen, also for a school. David is working on a bedroom suite. Other commissions are a coffee table, three library chairs and a diningroom suite to seat ten.

So far Chris feels he has been very lucky, his clients have given him a lot of freedom in terms of design. Both he and David would like to have an exhibition, but in the near future it could only be one of borrowed pieces. David feels that a large proportion of an exhibition should be for sale. He says, 'Commissions are a way of making a living but there is a lot of experimenting I want to do. It's a higher risk thing to be able to experiment on designs and then sell on spec, but I think that's what I would like to do.'

Helen Lewis

Helen Lewis is a freelance wordsmith (writer) newly graduated from the Canberra C. A. E. 's course on professional writing.

Geoff Hannah

Photography by Oliver Strewe

Detail of secretaire; main timber is cross-branded red cedar

Secretaire, English design c. 1700

Detail, front left door

Geoff Hannah

Detail of cylinder desk leg

Detail of side skirt

EVERY room of Geoff Hannah's Lismore home is a showcase for his work in period furniture reproduction, marquetry and inlay. Even the clocks chime with a replicated tone.

For the past twelve and a half years Geoff has been obsessed with furniture, particularly French styles from the periods 1650 till 1820. He says it began with his failure to complete a modern design dressing table. The design was functional, it was robust enough and well made, but he just couldn't finish it. While working on the piece he saw some illustrations of a Queen Anne style dressing table, and from that moment on the modern table seemed ugly and without feeling. He abandoned it and immediately set to work on the Queen Anne. Since that first exercise, Geoff has produced some fine examples of period furniture well beyond his achievement with the Queen Anne, yet this piece has had a place in all his exhibitions, as for him it marks the beginning of his dedication to fine period reproduction.

Geoff Hannah was born and grew up at Busby's Flat some twenty five miles outside of Casino in Northern New South Wales. Timber has always been part of his life — his father cut girders and sleepers for the railways, and as a child his hobby was to build boats from the timber salvaged from refrigerator cases. At the age of fifteen, he was apprenticed as a cabinet maker to Wilber Willis at Lismore. He stayed with Willis for ten years, learning what he now refers to as the basics of cabinet making — that experience onto which he has built the specialist direction of this work.

For the past eight and a half years Geoff has worked alone and with one apprentice, earning his living from commissioned work in period furniture reproduction and restoration. In this time his skills have developed

considerably, especially with inlay and marquetry. It is in the fine work of inlay and marquetry that Geoff finds most satisfaction.

It is both flattering and frustrating, according to Geoff, to have people refuse to believe that his marquetry is marquetry and not a transfer of some sort. And he feels that even those who understand the work and its difficulties can never appreciate the amount of time it takes. Perhaps only the artist can understand it. Geoff describes the production of a work as 'like being somewhere else for a long time'. One piece, a secretaire completed in 1978, took a total of 720 hours over twelve weeks. Geoff couldn't stop working, and devoted himself solely to the one piece.

'Marquetry is an art that belongs to a period that considered time and skills quite differently from this age', says Geoff. There are traditional skills involved in the detail of this art and he believes that, along with the tools that were evolved by various masters, we have lost ways of working in attempts to gain time and "efficiency". The differences are often only small, but in the art of reproduction Geoff is striving to emulate those masters whose work brought the art to its highest form.

For three months in 1980, Geoff Hannah toured England and France on a Churchill Fellowship to study the furniture made between 1650 and 1850. He visited the museums that hold the best examples of work from these periods, and studied at first hand the masterpieces of such craftsmen as Thomas Chippendale, Jean François Oeben, Jean Henri Riesener, and André Charles Boulle, the leading figures in furniture making for Geoff's area of reproduction. In London he visited the collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Wallace Collection (famous for its holdings of French work, and the home of Dasson's copy of the Bureau du Roi Louis XV) and the Geffrey Museum. He travelled to the Brighton Pavilion, Blenheim Palace, Kensington Palace and numerous cathederals throughout England, where he pursued a sideline of Gothic carving. There was also time to make the journey to Haslemere where he visited the famed harpsicord maker, Arnold Dolmetch.

In France the tour was as extensive and included visits to every important collection. In Paris on Mondays, when the Louvre was closed, Geoff was given *carte blanche* to tour and inspect the furniture exhibits. This was one of the most important parts of his tour. Geoff has always had plans, diagrams, pictures, and has even examined some good reproductions of fine period work, but there was no comparison to being on the spot with the real thing, and opening and handling the work itself. He could see finishes in marquetry and gilding, look closely at the fitting of locks and mechanisms, and fill a few of the gaps that had nagged and worried him working so far away from the original material. Not only were all exhibits open to his examination, but he was also able to discuss methods and materials with the restoration staff at each collection.

At the Château de Versailles, Geoff was the guest of the chief *ébéniste* (cabinetmaker), Monsieur Michel Tigreat. During his stay he was instructed by Monsieur Tigreat in the fine points of construction with examples from the best works of the periods. It was here that Geoff opened the gilded drawers of the original Bureau du Roi Louis XV — the work that was started by the great Jean François Oeben and completed by his pupil, Jean Henri Riesener. Having seen the famous Dasson copy in the Wallace Collection, Geoff was now able to compare the finest copy work with the supreme achievement of the original, and under the tutelage of the leading living French craftsman, Tigreat.

It was also at the Château de Versailles that Geoff gained new insights into the traditions of marquetry and inlay. He saw the very best that has been done, and the very best that is being done today. For an Australian artist, living in rural New South Wales, there was possibly no other way to learn about methods of laying materials such as tortoise shell, ivory, gold, horn, pewter, and mother of pearl. But three months were not enough to study the work of some two hundred years of cabinetmaking, and although Geoff returned enthused and with a better knowledge of period detail and methods, he feels that for his work to go further toward the standards of the European craftsmen, he will have to return for more extensive study and instruction.

Marquetry, veneering and gilding are rare crafts here in Australia, but Geoff Hannah is committed to their development and promotion. He has one apprentice, and will have another; he is a member of the Northern Rivers Woodcraft Group, contributing his particular skills to that organisation; and as well, gives lectures and workshops to students and those seeking work experience.

Nicholas Pounder

Nicholas Pounder is a freelance writer living at Casino in northern New South Wales.

Cylinder type desk in Louis XVI style; the principal timbers used are red cedar and Queensland maple. In the front bouquet (detail below), the leaves are of white beech funed in ammonia, roses are of Queensland maple and stems are from rosewood; the ribbon is cut from Sapeli mahogany

Judy Leach

Photography by Clive Jeffery

JUDY Leach is a ceramic artist whose work has represented Australia at the International Ceramics Exhibition in Faenza, Italy, and won for her awards at home, in New Zealand, and in the United States. She is an artist prepared to take personal and financial risks to further her development, and has now self-financed two study trips to the United States.

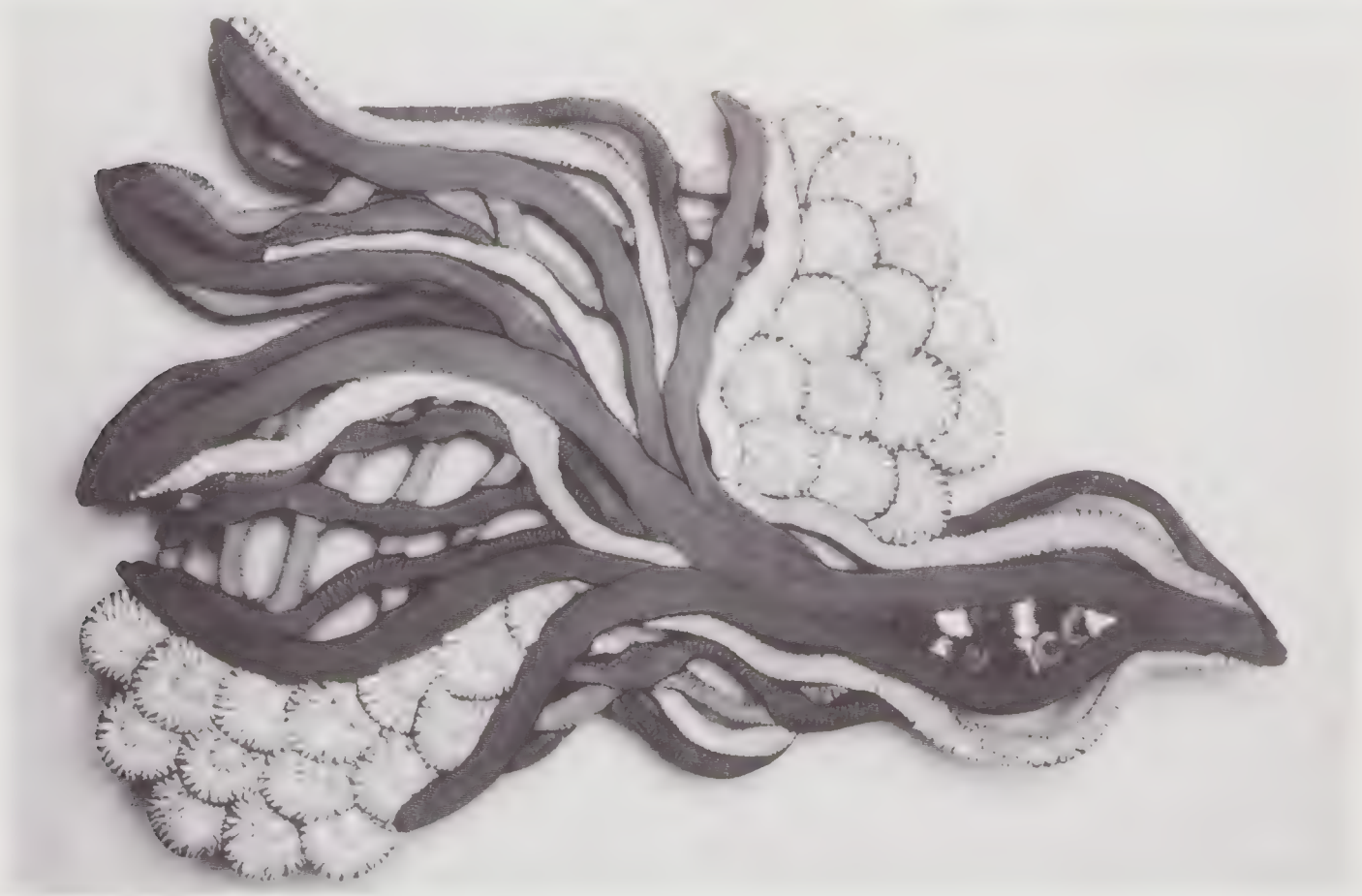
Judy's first trip was in 1980, when she enrolled at the Sun Valley Centre for Arts and Humanities in Sun Valley, Idaho. At the end of 1979 Judy had completed the Ceramics Certificate Course at East Sydney Technical College and felt a need to 'see new people and new places, and to explore further the medium of clay'.

'I undertook the course at East Sydney because I felt I had to further the knowledge I had gained from eighteen months part-time study in handbuilding techniques,' says Judy. 'Nothing is more frustrating than having an idea you can't give life to because you lack the skills and knowledge of a material in order to create.'

The Ceramics Certificate Course was a production course, and while it provided Judy with a sound basic training and the ability to earn a living from her craft, it also sent her in a direction quite different from that of production pottery. Returning to handbuilding techniques, she began to explore the forms and colours of her environment. It was at the Sun Valley Centre for Arts and Humanities that Judy confirmed her chosen field of sculptural ceramics.

'The Sun Valley area is extremely beautiful,' says Judy. 'It

Vessel sculpture, 30 x 25 cm



Wall piece, 40 x 28 cm.

Photography by Clive Jeffery

Opposite page: Table piece in Earthenware, 33 x 27 cm

Sculptural form, 35 x 39 cm

Vessel sculpture, 30 x 24 cm

Wall sculpture, 37 x 23 cm

Sculpture, 31 x 30 cm

inspired me to start thinking seriously about colour and the possibility of introducing another medium, glass, into my work with clay.'

It was during her stay at Sun Valley that Judy met visiting artists from Indiana. They were aware of her interest in making a second visit to the States, and Dan Engelke of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, invited her to return as a special student at the University for two semesters.

At the end of 1981 Judy returned to the United States and commenced study at Purdue University. Concentrating on the development of the ideas on colour initiated by her stay at Sun Valley, Judy began colour testing in porcelain while still working in earthenware. She then made the switch to porcelain.

'For a time I felt as if I had lost my direction, and after playing with colour for a time I went back to earthenware. With further testing I was able to achieve colours in earthenware which enhance my work and still retain an organic quality. I felt that quality had been lost when working in porcelain.'

The return to earthenware generated an exploration of form and Judy began to develop a new vessel shape on a pedestal. The resolution of form between vessel and base proved difficult; it was a visit to the Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art in Chicago, and the bases of the Chinese jade carvings which Judy saw there, which provided the inspiration to reach a solution.

Judy then directed her work towards a solo exhibition to be held at the University.

'The pieces shown in this exhibition were the result of an attempt to convey my love for the coast, for the cliffs and foaming seas, for the waves — at times lace-like — as they leap above the rocks. I try to express the exquisite fragility of the coast and the warmth and dryness of the inland, and the nuances of colour that exist within the whole.'

Judy uses colour, pattern and surface to convey her images. She builds a base from a slab or by coiling and makes small coils into discs, joining each one to the base, weaving them into patterns and shapes and allowing the rhythm and concept to develop out of the building process. The inner surface of her pieces are smooth, and the outer surfaces more textured.

'The desire to work with clay, to create with this medium, has been with me since childhood,' says Judy. 'In fact, it propelled me from a career in fashion into full-time ceramics. My work now reveals a personal statement of my reaction to the Australian environment, and it was my overseas study which gave me the opportunity to test the intensity of that reaction and the opportunity to develop the techniques to express it.'

K.L.

THE POTTERY OF HAROLD HUGHAN

Presented in conjunction with Port-O-Kiln (Aust.) Pty Ltd.

Harold Hughan at work in his unchanged Glen Iris workshop, Victoria

THE front of the neat, white-painted weather-board house build in Glen Iris in Victoria in 1939 gives no hint that in a small workshop at the back the first feldspathic-glazed, studio stone-ware in Australia was made. and some of the best pots of the last forty years have been produced. This is the workshop of Harold Hughan, who is now the most widely respected potter in the country and whose output, at the age of ninety, is scarcely diminished

Photography by Henry Talbot

THE POTTERY OF HAROLD HUGHAN

The reproduction of colour plates of Harold Hughan's work in this monograph was sponsored by Port-O-Kiln (Aust.) Pty Ltd.

All coloured and black and white photographs of Harold Hughan's work in this supplement were taken by Henry Jolles of Melbourne

HAROLD Randolph Hughan was born in Mildura on the 11th July, 1893, the second eldest in a family of five boys and five girls. About 1894 Hughan's father, Randolph, a horticulturalist, settled in Mildura. The family lived in a two-storey weatherboard house at the rear of the Chaffey brothers' house and Randolph was the Supervisor during their early development of irrigation. In 1895 the family moved to Hopetoun in the Mallee. It was here that the young Harold Hughan first went to school and came to know and to have a lasting affection for the unique landscape of the area. The Wyperfeld National Park, north west of Hopetoun, has remained one of the most vivid of his earliest memories and, as we shall see, the flowers and foliage to be found in the park reappear many years after in the decoration of his pots. This interest in the indigenous flora may very well have been further stimulated by the next move for, after experimenting successfully with wheat growing in an area north of Hopetoun, Randolph Hughan was eventually defeated by the drought and early in 1901 took his family to Hamilton where he was appointed Curator of the Botanical Gardens, a position he held for forty-four years.

In Hamilton, Harold Hughan completed his

Jar, *earthenware, ht 19.4cm, c.1944. Tin-glaze, brush decoration.* The artist

Bowl, *stoneware, diam 21.3cm, c.1946 (numbered 5 on base). Celadon glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Opposite: Decanter, *stoneware ht 23.5cm 1950-1955. Feldspathic glaze, impressed and painted decoration.* National Gallery of Victoria

THE POTTERY OF HAROLD HUGHAN

Jar, *stoneware, ht 22.2cm c.1950. Tenmoku glaze, undecorated.* The artist

schooling in 1906 and was then apprenticed to mechanical engineering at a foundry there. The profession of engineer was one he was to pursue all his life. At the completion of his apprenticeship in 1909 he worked for a short time as shift superintendent at a power station in Hamilton.

In 1910 he went to Geelong, where his paternal grandparents had settled, and there he decided to abandon mechanical for electrical engineering. He was employed as a switchboard supervisor with the Melbourne Electric Supply, but shift work precluded regular attendance at technical college and Hughan's course of electrical engineering was begun — and completed — by correspondence with the International Correspondence School in London. Because there was then very little heavy industry in Geelong and the prospects for future employment were not encouraging, Hughan decided to become a full-time soldier and in 1912 he joined the Royal Australian Engineers. After a course at Swann Island he was sent for twelve

Bottle, *stoneware, ht 21.2cm, c.1953. Feldspathic glaze, incised decoration.* Private collection

Left: Jar, *stoneware, ht 24.2cm, 1949-50. Feldspathic glaze with iron and cobalt decoration.* National Gallery of Victoria

months to Pt. Nepean where he found the life congenial and the posting was not arduous.

Hughan continued to serve at home in the Royal Australian Engineers for the first fourteen months of the First World War. Although he was anxious for action overseas, permanent soldiers were precluded from joining the Australian Imperial Force and Hughan went to Adelaide where he enlisted as a private on 27th October 1915. In common with many men at the time, he advanced his age by two years. The group he joined became the 3rd Australian Divisional Signal Company which embarked on H.M.A.S. Ascanius in May, 1916 and Hughan served in England and France with the 3rd Australian Division Signal Company and the 44th Australian Infantry Battalion. In November, 1917 he was commissioned to the rank of second lieutenant for his services at the battle of Paschendale.

After the war, Hughan went to England hoping for full-time study at the Manchester Technical

Covered jar, *stoneware, ht 22.5cm, c.1954. Tenmoku glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Bowl, *stoneware, diam 14.1cm, c.1953. Celadon glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Above (left): Bowl, *stoneware, diam 20.3cm, 1955-1960. Celadon glaze, undecorated*

Above (right): Covered jar, *stoneware, ht 14.9cm, c.1967. Celadon glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Below: Bowl, *stoneware, diam 23.7cm, 1950-1955. Iron glaze over feldspathic glaze, incised decoration.* Private collection

Institute. In the event he took a job with the Lancashire Dynamo Company and studied part-time at the Institute. While working in Lancashire he met Lily Booth who was born in Wavertree and was at the time living with Hughan's relatives. They were married in Liverpool in September 1919. Hughan was repatriated to Australia and the couple arrived in February, 1920 and Harold Hughan's army service was terminated two months later. He worked at first on the roads at Hamilton, then as a second engineer at the Murtoa Power Station. From 1921 until 1923, when he went into partnership in Warrnambool with a fellow engineer, he was Chief Instructor at the Electrical Trades School (situated on the site of the present National Gallery of Victoria) conducted by the Repatriation Department. The partnership was dissolved after almost five years and in May, 1928 Hughan joined the firm of Oliver J. Nilsen with whom he worked until his retirement as Works Superintendent, in February, 1963. These were years of increased activity and responsibility for Hughan as Nilsens was — and is — a firm with Australia-wide interests and he was in charge of some of the major power installations then being undertaken. Whilst the duties were onerous especially during the years of the Second World War they did, at least, give him an opportunity to travel and to see something of the country and the major cities.

Harold Hughan was well into his forties before he became involved with pottery. Few potters whose reputation and achievement have been so marked can have come so late to their craft. The interest was not completely without foundation; Hughan had always been interested in several crafts and he had painted some very accomplished watercolours. During his early married years and particularly during the Depression, Hughan's ability as a woodworker allowed him to make much of the family furniture. He was also interested in weaving and about 1932 he began the construction of several looms. Weaving was a pursuit he took up during an illness, a legacy of the war, which confined him to Macleod Hospital for many months in the mid 1940s. Eventually weaving was abandoned for pottery and for the rest of her life Lily Hughan (who died in 1966) became the family's keenest weaver.

About 1936 *The Herald Home Handyman* was published and the Hughans' son, Robert, inspired by the chapter on pottery by Marguerite Mahood,

Opposite (top): Bowl, *stoneware, diam 14.7cm, 1950-1955. Feldspathic glaze, incised decoration.* Private collection

Opposite (bottom): Bowl, *stoneware, diam 16.5cm, 1955-1960. Celadon glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

THE POTTERY OF HAROLD HUGHAN

Bottle, *stoneware, ht 28.1cm, c.1956. Apple-wood ash glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

constructed a small muffle kiln at Estella Street, Glen Iris, where the family was then living. In this he and his mother fired small, handbuilt lead-glazed earthenware pots with some underglaze. The wares were placed inside a refactory fireclay-box and were surrounded by a coke and wood fire. The kiln was necessarily small because of the difficulty of constructing a sufficiently large box.

In 1937, while teaching confectionery making with a Mental Hospitals auxiliary at Mont Park, Lily Hughan met F. E. Cox (who signed his pots 'Joliffe', his mother's maiden name) who was teaching pottery there. Cox was a carpet salesman and importer by profession but he had learnt pottery from Arthur Merric Boyd (1862-1940) and, consequently, believed firmly in the principles of handbuilding. Indeed, he completely rejected the wheel. Although at this time Harold Hugan took little more than a polite interest in Lily Hughan's and Robert's attempts at pottery, he made several visits with them in 1938 to Cox's house in Neerim Road, Murrumbeena where Cox dogmatically explained the special virtues of his method of handbuilding. Surprisingly, in view of his complete commitment to handbuilding, it was Cox who introduced Robert Hughan to Bernard Leach's seminal work, *A Potter's Book* when it was published in 1940.

In 1939, the Hughans moved to Sherwood Street, Glen Iris but it was not until 1941 that Harold Hughan, perhaps because of his impatience with the amateur efforts of his wife and son, began to make pottery and his first pots were handbuilt. He persisted with these for a time and his interest in the craft slowly became intense and all absorbing. Handbuilding, he soon felt, was unsatisfactory and limiting and he resolved to use a wheel. No suitable wheel was to be found and he devised one from a crank-shaft salvaged from a car found at the tip and it is this wheel which Hughan still uses. Although he now had a wheel, Harold Hughan had never at that time seen a pot thrown and he taught himself by propping up in front of him a copy of *The Potter's Craft* by C. F. Binns and carefully following the clear and invaluable illustrations. At the same time Robert, under Cox's guidance, had learnt to fire the large kiln at Cox's house and in 1942 he constructed a similar kiln at Sherwood Street, principally to fire the wares his mother was still making. In the terminology of the day, this kiln was called a miniature Newcastle kiln, and Cox had almost certainly copied it from Merric Boyd. It was a down-draught kiln with a capacity of a half metre cubed and had twin fire boxes. Where a potter would now use two gas burners placed either side of the ware space and separated by a bag wall, the Cox kiln had fire bars at the bottom of each of the burner spaces with the ash pit beneath. Wood and coke were fed through small doors where burners would now be mounted.

In this kiln Hughan produced some lead-glazed pots and, influenced by Italian maiolica of the late 15th century, experimented with tin-glazing. Towards the end of the life of this kiln a few stoneware pots were made. These were inspired by the one chapter in Binns' book which dealt with high-fired wares. After two or three years the kiln was found to be too small and, in 1945 or 1946, a climbing kiln was built.

In 1944 Hughan was ill and spent nine months in Macleod hospital. Before going to hospital he had read his son's copy of *A Potter's Book* and he actually planned the new kiln whilst he was in hospital and drew it brick by brick ready for building as soon as he recovered. In fact, he built the kiln during weekend leave from the hospital.

Covered jar, *stoneware, ht 16.7cm, 1950-1955. Iron glaze over feldspathic glaze, incised decoration.* National Gallery of Victoria

The two chamber construction used ducts which ran from the first chamber to the second and it was possible, on reaching temperature, to close off the first chamber to allow the ducts to the second chamber to be opened. Thus, the second chamber reached approximately the same temperature as the first and although this was found to work satisfactorily it was eventually decided to use the second chamber only for bisque. After packing the kiln a small fire was commenced, usually in the late afternoon, and maintained about six hours, from about 5.00pm to 11.00pm. At this point the fire box was filled with larger pieces of wood and the ash pit sealed. Thus, the wood burnt slowly and, because of the lack of oxygen, finished as charcoal at red heat. The first chamber had reached about 600° C by 6.00am the following morning and was then fed slowly with wood and a little coke to reach a temperature of 1300° C at 10.00pm. At this point the bisque chamber had reached 850° C - 900° C.

The last four hours of firing were very anxious; gases from the first chamber, which were reducing, became oxidised on reaching the atmosphere at the top of the chimney sixteen feet above the ground, and burst into flames. However, understanding and sympathetic neighbours and an apparently unobservant fire brigade left them undisturbed. In all, the firing process lasted some 28 hours.

The fine collection of Chinese Song dynasty ceramics given to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1938 by Mr and Mrs H. W. Kent, were well known to Hughan. He had studied them closely and decided it was these he now wished to emulate. He had also subscribed to the English magazine *Pottery Quarterly* since its inception and through this journal he became aware of the work

and philosophy, not only of Bernard Leach, but of Harry Davis and Michael Cardew. This was the impulse he needed; the wood-fired kiln was ready to hand and it was here that the first Leach-inspired, feldspathic glazed stoneware made by an artist-potter was produced in Australia. It is interesting to note that the pots from the first one or two firings in the wood-fired kiln were progressively numbered with an incised number on the base. The potter soon abandoned this scheme as being unworkable. After the kiln had been in use for some years, the wood supplied to Melbourne households deteriorated in quality. It was too green and quite unsuited to obtaining stoneware temperatures but, in the early 1950s, petrol and oil products became more easily available and cheaper and the front mounted fire-box was dismantled to enable an oil burner to be installed, firing underneath the hearth supporting the ware in the first chamber. This proved, however, to be a design disaster. The burner was too small and had to be driven at full capacity, producing a small hot flame which melted the hearth refractories in the area which carried all the load. A down-draught design was then adopted and the kiln configuration changed to its present form. The first chamber was dismantled and widened by approximately twelve inches and a bag wall added leaving a space between it and the wall of the second chamber. The oil burner was fired into this space with the flames from it passing over and underneath the pack and then on into the bisque chamber and thus to the chimney. An auxiliary burner was used to raise the temperature of the second chamber to 900° C and the kiln was found to work satisfactorily. Although no longer used the kiln is still in working order.

From the first Hughan had the highest standards and all his work was informed by a vision of the pot which was "right"; the glaze, the form, the decoration had all to coalesce before he could be satisfied.

Any pieces which fell below the rigorous standards he had set himself were very often dropped on the brick floor in front of the kiln as soon as they were removed. Many of them were, of course, very good but failed to meet Hughan's expectations.

In the late 1960s the large oil-fired kiln became too cumbersome and difficult for one man to operate and liquid petroleum gas began to be a more attractive source of heat. As he grew older Hughan needed a more manageable kiln and the currently used down-draught catenary arch kiln was designed and built in 1968.

In the 1940s Hughan had to begin by finding a suitable clay. No appropriate stoneware clay was then being commercially produced and Hughan and his son dug clay from railway cuttings close to their Glen Iris home and from ocean beaches as far away as Ocean Grove. However, as he was a prolific thrower, this did not produce clay in sufficient quantities and they set out to produce a stoneware body from materials then commercially available to industry. A combination of fire clays, ball clays and fireclay grog from well known deposits in Hallam, Bacchus Marsh and Bendigo was settled on and was used for years although the amount of ball clay was varied from time to time. They were dry milled clays and from these they made a body which was, in fact, the forerunner of a present-day commercial blend. From the beginning Hughan wanted to be simple, even primitive, without reliance on anything but the most basic and essential equipment. Even his house in Glen Iris was intended to convey the impression of a country cottage. But it is the workshop which illustrates the concept most vividly; it is little more than two lean-to sheds, oppressively hot in summer and bitterly cold, damp and draughty in winter. It has, however, given service for more than forty years. The desire to be uncomplicated, natural and spontaneous in his working methods has never left him.

Left: Jug, *stoneware, ht 19cm, 1965-1970. Feldspathic glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Right: Jug, *stoneware, ht 23.7cm, 1965-1970. Tenmoku glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Hughan's son, Robert, turned his attention to the scientific aspect of pottery and although he himself was to make some pots later it was in the chemistry of ceramics that his chief interest lay and which he adopted as his profession. Harold Hughan's correspondence course in electrical engineering had included some basic chemistry but it was Robert Hughan's more specialised knowledge which proved to be of the greatest assistance.

The first pots from the wood-fired kiln were functional wares, simple in shape with robust forms, and they were immediately noticed and collected. There was never any doubt about their practicability — spouts poured, lids fitted and the bases were safe for polished woods. Decoration was limited to a few simple lines or schematic foliage designs painted or incised. The glazes used were the iron-rich, dark tenmokus breaking to rust on the edges and silky green or grey-green celadons. It is these two glazes which he has continued to use, almost unchanged, from the first. His tenmoku glaze is fledspar 41.5%, limestone 18%, ball clay 13.5% and silica 27% whilst the celadon glaze recipe is feldspar 25%, kaolin 6.5%, ball clay 20%, flint 20%, whiting 25% and iron oxide 1.5%.

It should perhaps be emphasised that until 1963 Harold Hughan was working as an electrical engineer charged with conducting a program employing up to two hundred men. His job took him from Queensland to Tasmania and pottery was necessarily a weekend activity. Nevertheless, he looked forward to each weekend as a relaxation from the difficulties of his job and the responsibilities of a supervising engineer.

During the late 1940s there were already enthusiastic collectors of Hughan's pottery but it

was the remarkably successful one-man exhibition held at Georges Gallery in Melbourne in 1950 which first brought his name to a sympathetic audience and wider circle of admirers. Later, small exhibitions and sales were held following each of the firings at the Glen Iris house. Although these were never advertised, buyers assembled on the day of a sale, sometimes hours before the appointed time and waited in the garden until the traditional opening time of 2.00pm whilst the Hughan family hid behind drawn blinds. When the doors were opened, always promptly on time, the polite scramble for pots was amusing to Lily Hughan and Robert but severely embarrassing to the potter.

Hughan's enduring concern has been with domestic and functional wares, but within this range there are certain shapes which he enjoys making above all others. He is very fond of lidded jars, particularly the superbly proportioned cut sided jars, and the impressively large platters. He believes he has some special feeling for them and it is for these that he is perhaps best known. He likes to make teapots and regards them as one of the potter's greatest challenges and he regrets they are now so little used. Hughan's pots are always thrown quickly in one piece and he uses a minimum amount of turning. The foot is turned and perhaps the lower part of the pot as well but as he throws the pot as he wants, he rarely finds it necessary to reduce the thickness of the walls. In any case, he prefers the marks made by the potter's fingers to remain evident.

After Hughan's retirement the production of pottery increased and there was time to experiment. With the increase in production came a new freedom of decoration and the memories of boyhood now became significant. Orchids and wildflowers began to be used as decoration and the brushwork was more spontaneous and free. As a legacy of his watercolour painting, Hughan enjoys painting with a brush and likes to approach the pot without previous thought of the decoration he will use. He works intuitively and believes that, in this way, he achieves decorations which are entirely natural and without constraint. There is almost no recent decoration which cannot be directly related to nature. Whilst travelling to Darwin in early 1980, Hughan had seen from the aeroplane the beds of dried creeks and rivers which meandered across the arid outback. The unexpected and often vivid colours became the inspiration for the decoration, achieved with poured glazes, on a series of very large platters made soon after his return. On other pieces, again a series of large platters, the decoration of three groups of leaves, has remained virtually unchanged over the years but the repetition has given the brushwork a dexterity and fluidity achieved only by constant and dedicated practice.

The decoration which Hughan employs is never obtrusive and it always echoes and subtly underlines and respects the form on which it is placed.

Platter, *stoneware, diam 36.2cm, c.1975. Slip over feldspathic glaze, cobalt brush decoration.* Private collection

Left: Covered jar, *stoneware, ht 22.2cm, 1959-1960. Celadon glaze, undecorated.* National Gallery of Victoria

Below: Platter, *stoneware, diam 35.1cm, c.1968. High alumina glaze over tenmoku, wax resist decoration.* Mr and Mrs R. R. Hughan

THE POTTERY OF HAROLD HUGHAN

The primary influences which have helped shape Hughan's pottery are evident and are never denied by him. Chinese ceramics have, from the first, been an overriding stimulus particularly in the quality and range of the glazes employed. English country pottery, particularly the manifestations of it seen in the early work of Cardew and Davis, has also been important. Rough, but not too rough, and entirely without pretension these robust pots find their echoes in the pitchers and jugs which Hughan has made over the years. Japan, too, has recently had a significant impact on Hughan's work. The enduring and timeless quality of pots in the Japanese folk-art tradition, where the clay seems to be an extension of the potters hands, together with the controlled "accidental" glaze effects have been responsible for giving many of Hughan's later works a fluidity and plasticity unseen in the earlier pots which were informed by the control and refinement of the Chinese potters.

Domestic pottery has been Hughan's concern since he began as a potter and he has not moved from this. He believes it is the basis of pottery and that the daily use of well-made, practical pots is the aspect of the craft which gives the most pleasure. Yet he is aware of and interested in the directions which young potters are taking. He is sympathetic to the pressures on them and to their eagerness to experiment and investigate the sculptural and non-functional aspects of pottery. Whilst the move towards non-functional pottery is in Hughan's opinion inevitable, he cannot imagine a time when useful, domestic objects will not be in demand. He believes that those craftspeople hoping to make a living from pottery must rely heavily for their continued existence and prosperity on domestic wares.

As a self-taught potter, Harold Hughan is sceptical of the knowledge, apart from the most basic training, which the student can gain from art schools. He fears too much training may lead to

Bowl, *stoneware, diam 25.9 cm, 1955-1960. Celadon glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

the unconscious adoption of a 'house style' or a loss of spontaneity and ease in throwing and decorating. He has said that the person dedicated to pottery learns most from long hours of devoted work in his or her own workshop.

With a full-time job until his retirement, Hughan never found it necessary to make a living from pottery and indeed, his prices — sometimes to the chagrin of other potters — have always been agreeably low and were intended to do no more than cover the cost of materials and firing time. As a potter making domestic wares, he always hoped that the buyers would derive pleasure from the constant use of pots for the purpose they were made and would feel able to use them without the thought that a breakage would be a major financial disaster. The price charged was always the one he would consider reasonable if he were buying the pot himself. The economic difficulties facing young potters today are recognised by Harold Hughan and he is aware that his circumstances fortunately allowed him to create what he wanted without the burden of making a living from pottery alone.

Here then is a craftsman who has devoted forty years to pottery. He has become the most famous Australian potter of his generation and the small workshop in Glen Iris has achieved an almost legendary quality. In 1969 the National Gallery of Victoria mounted a Retrospective Exhibition of 440 pots in Hughan's honour. This was the first time that the achievements of an Australian potter had been recognised in this way. He is the Patron of the Victorian Ceramic Group and in 1978 was awarded the M.B.E. for his services to pottery. The National Gallery of Victoria acquired its first pot by him in 1950 and there are now twenty-six pieces in that collection. The Australian National Gallery purchased its first Hughan pot in the late 1960s and now has ten examples, and all State and major regional galleries can show examples of his work. A large platter is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Inevitably, amongst young potters, there has been a swing away from the philosophy of Leach, Cardew and Hamada and although Hughan has had a few imitators he cannot be said to have founded any school or assembled around him a group of disciples. To a large extent this is due to his refusal to take students. He has a dislike of teaching and readily admits it is not his strength. Nevertheless he has always been generous with his knowledge and willingly shares information and the fruits of long experience with other potters and with students. There have, too, been many young potters adventitiously influenced by him.

Hughan is working in one of the greatest pottery traditions and the huge body of work — jugs and casseroles, teapots and covered jars, platters and bowls — has firmly established his position in the history of the Australian studio pottery movement. An accident to his arm three years ago temporarily stopped the flow of pots from his hands but with courage and determination and — one suspects — sheer stubbornness he has continued to work and the pots he is now showing lack none of the vitality and assurance of pieces made almost forty years ago. The pots he has made — and is still making — are deceptively simple and although produced seemingly with complete naturalness, they have an elegance and sophistication born only of a complete empathy with the clay.

Hughan's development as a potter has been consistent and follows an unwavering line of progression from the start. Except for the abandonment of earthenware for stoneware there have been no major "gear changes" and Hughan's creative energy has not abated.

Our response to the pots is indefinable. Pleasant to use and to handle, their mastery of form and glaze evoke a profound sense of well-being and confidence. The pots are of the first importance in the story of pottery in Australia and one of its most notable achievements. The pleasure which they have given — and will continue to give — to a great many people, coupled with the dignity and influence of his life and work has guaranteed Hughan's place in the history of Australian twentieth century ceramics.

Kenneth Hood

I am grateful to Harold Hughan and his son Robert for their kindness in answering my numerous questions and for their patience in correcting and commenting on the various drafts of this article. Without their generous co-operation and assistance this article could not have been written. The opinions expressed in the article are mine and for these they cannot be held responsible.

K.H.

Kenneth Hood is Deputy Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

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Covered box, *porcelain, diam 11.1cm, 1975*

Left: Bottle, *Porcelain, ht 12.2cm, 1960-1965. Crackle glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Right: Bottle, *porcelain, ht 14cm 1960-1965. Crackle glaze, undecorated.* Private collection

Covered jar, *porcelain, ht 22.2cm, 1955-1960. Feldspathic glaze, iron brush decoration.* Private collection

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Large earthenware boar covered with deep green glaze; the inside hollow revealing buff coloured body. Ht 26.5 cm; length 38 cm. Chinese, Song dynasty, 13th century. Gift of Mr F. Storch 1983.

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Above: *'Ritual Vase'; barium and feldspar glazes, ht 63 cm*

Centre: *'Bird/Lizard Gargoyle Vase'; Peacock feathers and silver lustre on nickel barium glaze, ht 66 cm*

Left: *'Urn'; cast lugs, manganese brush decoration, ht 59 cm*

IN the long tradition of European and Asian painting it is possible to identify styles in which the medium of paint is denied, and other styles in which it is flaunted. That is, there are those styles which attempt to imitate the surface effect of whatever comprises the subject matter of the picture (for example, late medieval religious art, or contemporary "new realism"); and there are artists who allow the paint to be paint, to be seen to be what it is, who use the texture of the paint and the mark of the painting instrument. Rembrandt was such an artist, and so was Delacroix, and Jackson Pollock.

Similarly, there are ceramists who use clay as a means to an end and there are ceramists who are totally bound up in their material and whose work can be discussed in terms of technical matters such as clays, glazes, kilns and temperatures. It is interesting to take these attitudes as the extremes of a scale and to use this as a measure to discuss the work of Australian ceramists. If at one end we have Mark Thompson and at the other Col Levy, how would we describe the work of Laurens Tan?

Tan is like the artists of the figurative tradition who used their paint unashamedly as paint. When Rembrandt painted the feather in Titus's cap it was and remains clearly a stroke of paint representing a feather. When Delacroix painted a flame, it was with pleasure in the handling of the paint at the same time as making a recognisable image of a flame. When Laurens Tan makes images in the handles and feet of his pots, it is unashamedly clay, moulded by hand, which we see in the form of a diabolical face or an oriental monster. Not an abstraction or a pure form, not an attempt at (sur)realism, but a figurative image which honestly states what it is made from and which is decorative but integrated with the semi-traditional overall form of the pot or bowl or urn.

In September 1982 Tan exhibited at the Blackfriars Gallery in Glebe, Sydney — his first exhibition outside South Australia. The works in that exhibition are illustrated with this text and are described by Tan as 'a series of vessels that convey a feeling of the ritualistic, akin to earlier times when utensils said something about the spiritual and the superstitious nature of the household'.

'Legged Gargoyle Form', superimposed copper glaze, diam 27 cm

'Birdform Vessel', cornish stone and dry matt glazes, ht 15 cm

'Ceremonial Gargoyle Vase'

Detail of vase (left), ht 62 cm

'The lugs, legs and sculptural additions for which the term "gargoyle" holds an intuitive association can be read as an eclectic "coming-together" of things Gothic, Incan, Oriental, of the spirit of the Primitive,' says Tan. 'Forms are tall with slender, flaring necks, with gargoylesque decoration breaking up and punctuating areas of stoney onyx-like glazes: these decorations double as necessary handles or as an intrinsic part of the form. The organic folds of clay are beast, bird and lizard forms which, due to their looseness, look something like the "Alien". The work is also about surface quality — thick semi-transparent glazes against hard, abrasive ones — in various greens, purple, copper red, deep blues, and organic ashes. I think these effects work in providing a "temple" feeling, of subdued colour over active form. Further variation is achieved through spraying and over-spraying combinations and sequences of particular glazes.'

A recent experience is interesting. Returning from Sydney to Adelaide after the Blackfriars Gallery exhibition, he went via Melbourne and looked in on the Decorative Arts galleries at the National Gallery of Victoria. As he tells it, he "stumbled upon" two Shang Dynasty pots (13th century BC) described as "Ritualistic Vessels with lugs'. He says, 'Where these the parents of my pieces? I honestly don't remember seeing these particular sorts of pieces elsewhere before, and consequently I left the Gallery feeling profoundly intrigued.'

Laurens Tan was born in Holland of Chinese parents in 1950, and has lived in Australia since 1962. After working as an industrial screenprinter, he studied at the South Australian School of Art in the late 1970s. He paints in the figurative mode, and has had several successes in regional art competitions, winning the Laura Prize and the Whyalla Prize (both in South Australia) in 1980. His paintings rarely relate directly to his pots, but the fact that he paints may be a key to the essence of his ceramic style. He has been working with clay full-time for four years, currently lecturing in art part-time at the School of Art and Craft Adelaide. His future development promises to be most interesting. In 1983 Laurens Tan's exhibition program includes paintings and ceramics at Round Space, Adelaide in February and at the Jam Factory, Adelaide in August, and mixed media paintings at Profile, Caulfield, Victoria in October-November.

David Dolan

'Ritual Form', copper barium and feldspar glaze, ht 27 cm

Left: *Detail of 'Ritual Vase', dry barium glazes, ht 64 cm*

David Dolan lectured in visual art theory at the South Australian School of Art, 1973-1980. He is now Fine Arts Advisor to the Australiana Fund in Sydney and Canberra.

Cat 29 'Torso' porcelain lustre ht 30 x 19 cm

Maria Kuczynska

Photography by Allan Craig

THE starting point of Maria Kuczynska's work lies in her experience of history and of some of the major cultural manifestations of history. Her work reverberates with echoes of Ancient Greece, the Middle Ages and the Oriental world. As Sandra McGrath said, "the works have a haunting familiarity one sees historical footnotes which conjure up memories of Hellenistic, oriental or mediaeval artistry."[1] Yet, her work is never a pale shadow of these cultures. It is rather, a carefully refined process of absorption and assimilation of history and the artist's own contemporary experience, which results in Kuczynska's enigmatically beautiful sculpture. The theme of history has an obvious and intimate relationship with the theme of time, and Kuczynska's works evoke strong associations of history's continuing flow (immortality) and man's transience (mortality). Her work is a reminder that each generation of mankind is only a very small part of the continuum of history, but it is also a reminder that

Cat. 1: 'Standing Figure', stoneware, ht 180 x 68 cm

Cat. 8: 'Standing Figure', porcelain, lustre, ht 47 x 13 cm

Cat. 6: 'Standing Figure', porcelain, lustre ht 55 x 19 cm. Collection Canberra School of Art

Cat. 38: 'Buddha', porcelain, lustre, ht 24 x 23 cm

Cat. 12: 'Samurai', blackfired earthenware ht 33 x 38 cm

Cat. 35: 'Sarcophagus', porcelain, lustre, ht 14 x 25 cm

Cat. 31: 'Bust', porcelain, lustre, ht 49 x 63 cm

Below: *Cat. 3: 'Standing Figure', porcelain, ht 50 x 12 cm*

individuals can make lasting contributions to that continuum. Kuczynska's contemporary experience may suggest the fragility of the individual in certain societies but it also attests to the strength of the artist's creative talent. Her work presents to us, not a nostalgic look at man's past glories but a fresh and powerful (and sometimes disturbing) look at our contemporary situation. The power and beauty of much of her work speaks of the strength of the human condition.

In 'Standing Figure' (Cat. 3), a columnar figure is disposed frontally towards the viewer. The obvious point of reference for this piece is Classical Greek sculpture; indeed the slight bend at the left hip is strongly reminiscent of the famous curve favoured by Praxiteles and his followers in 4th century B. C. Athens. This classic simplicity is played off against an oriental lithesomeness, the latter partially suggested by the folds of porcelain representing the drapery which subtly indicate the body underneath. The surface has been manipulated into rough and smooth areas which lead the eye to explore the whole piece and also tease the initial impact of monumental simplicity which the work presents. This contrast between the monumental and the particular occurs often in Kuczynska's work and is a reference to the universality of history and time and the mortality of man. This is seen in other of the 'Standing Figures'. Sometimes there is less concern with the chiaroscuro effect of controlling surfaces and more emphasis on the representation of Winckelmann's description of classic art as embodying *'edle Einfalt und stille Grösse'* (noble simplicity and calm grandeur). 'Standing Figure' (Cat. 6) is moulded with slabs of porcelain modulated with applied lustres. These slabs give a sail-like effect evocative of slow, definite movement. Once again we are presented with contrasts — heaviness versus lightness, solemnity versus etherality — which point to Kuczynska's main concern, namely man's transience confronted with the inexorable march of time (history). The standing figures have an obvious visual relation to Greek art and are useful starting-points for a discussion of Kuczynska's work since their physical size would seem to belie their monumentality[2] (apart from one piece which is 180.00 cm high, the standing figures range between 36.00 cm and 60.00 cm high). But it is this seeming contradiction that once again stresses the artist's main theme. In the sitting figures one finds extremely elegant examples of the resolution of surface and form. Through tonal variations

Cat. 32: 'Bust', blackfired earthenware, ht 50 x 47 cm

(chiaroscuro), clay treatment and the juxtapositions of textures, the viewer is made aware of the surface. This is cleverly underplayed by the seated format of the figures, where the strong planes of the bodies create "viewing spaces" for the rich surface treatment. But again Kuczynska sets up contrasts. Rather than become absorbed in the surface the viewer is forced to come to terms with the interrelationship between the parts which go to make up the whole. While one is aware of the visual autonomy of each of the parts (and indeed the surface treatment makes it extremely difficult not to be), through the compact simplicity of the overall form one gains an appreciation of the unity of the pieces. 'Sitting Figure' (Cat. 37) has less play with varying surface texture and achieves an overall evenness of surface through the use of lustre. This evenness adds emphasis to the sculptural slabs of porcelain and further stressed the overlocking and interplay of forms. Kuczynska creates a marvellous tension in this piece by the combination of harsh angles between the torso and the right thigh, and then in an elegant solution resolves this tension by lowering the angle of the left thigh to offset the feeling of disequilibrium.

The two 'Samurai' (Cat. 12) are I think sculptural *tours de force*. They have a feeling of contained energy in their classic sculptural forms which is then broken by the dynamic flow of energy (strength) in the angular thrusts of the thighs. The overall inverted Y-format of each piece has an inherent feeling of energy flow but the artist allows this to express itself and then re-routes it back into each piece imbuing them with their own vitality and force. That this is done with such accomplished sculptural skill and aesthetic elegance is another bonus.

Another significant component of Kuczynska's *oeuvre* are the 'Head' and 'Helmet' pieces. In some of these thier heroic simplicity gives an immediate impression of strength and power. The armour plating of the massive chest and shoulders contains an enormous feeling of latent energy, of sinister forces of evil awaiting release. This feeling of encapsulated energy is stressed in some examples by the head's being encased in a crusader-like helmet like some nameless force about to explode from its bindings. For some the bindings become a porcelain prison. The head is contained and subdued. It is mouthless and cannot voice an opinion. The ambiguity discussed above is presented here. Is the head wrapped in a bandage or is it a metal helmet? Why is there only one opening for the 'head' to see through? Some pieces in this series present a feeling of resigned acceptance of a fate predestined and over which the individual has no control, rather than a sense of imminent explosion. the sinister nature of some of the 'Heads' becomes in others an evocation of sadness and oppression. This is also seen in some of the 'Kneeling Figures' where the figure appears not to be praying so much as pleading for something that he does not know. The "unseeing eye" becomes symbolic of a universal need, a universal expression of the rights of the individual. The large piece 'Helmet' (Cat. 13) is a particularly impressive summation of much of the concerns of the smaller heads. Its severe and enthralling beauty is visually captivating, its elegant form and simplicity sculpturally exciting, and the enigma of the faceless individual imbues it with an emotional charge rarely seen in contemporary sculpture.

Cat. 13: 'Helmet', blackfired earthenware, ht 35 x 19 cm

Standing Figure'

'Bust' (Cat. 32) is a strong graphic statement in clay. It has an immediacy and a presence through the artist's bold use of clay, and its harsh strength in many ways presents a distillation of Kuczynska's experience of the Australian landscape. It is the universal rather than the particular which attracts her. For Kuczynska the story of Ned Kelly and Nolan's painted version of it are attractive because they 'remind her of Ulysses' [3]

As can be seen from these few observations the work of Maria Kuczynska is about humankind and his her situation in the world, presented with references to our earlier history. It is work strongly concerned with the artist as a commentator on her environment. It is often also work of extraordinary attraction. Kuczynska has drawn extensively from earlier art to supply a basic visual vocabulary. To this she has added her own personality and sensibilities. The elegant simplicity of her work is the result of a consummate creative talent. She combines the techniques of ceramics and sculpture to create her own aesthetic mode. It is rare to find strong statements about the condition of humanity in the contemporary world combined with the powerful beauty and enigmatic attraction that one finds in her work. History gives us the opportunity to look at ourselves in the context of what has preceded us. 'Art needs distance, needs to boil inside you ... to take shape and form, to become international, to become universal' [4] . In the work of Maria Kuczynska the faceless, universal figure caught up in a fate not determined by himself is given eloquent expression.

Peter Haynes©

Notes:

(1) McGrath, Sandra *The Australian*, January 8-9, 1983
(2) Apart from one piece which is 180.00 cm high, the standing figures range between 36.00 cm and 60.00 cm high.
(3) op. cit. (1)
(4) ibid.

This article is very closely based on the author's introductory essay to the catalogue for the exhibition 'Maria Kuczynska Ceramic Sculpture' currently touring Australia. Peter Haynes is Curator of Exhibitions at the Canberra School of Art, and was the organisor of the exhibition.

Pip White

Pip White

Mere Ubu teapot, ht 18 cm

PIP White first started to work seriously in clay in 1973. She had just completed a Diploma in Education at the University of Western Australia after three years study to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree, and it was a growing disenchantment with these purely academic studies, combined with the frustration of not being able to translate ideas and emotions into visual terms, which prompted her to turn to ceramics.

Pip majored in French at university and in 1974, with a second language at her command, she set off to explore the cultures of Africa and Europe. She recalls that it was the vitality and colour of the Mediterranean cultures encountered during her three years overseas which awakened her to the possibilities of developing a completely individual imagery: 'I was particularly moved by the highly stylised forms and extraordinary figurative designs in Romanesque carving and frescoes, and by the brilliant colours and composition of Islamic decoration. This infatuation with colour and intense decoration was strengthened further when I saw more traditional North African potteries, bright lead-glazed medieval earthenware pots and roofing tiles, and then the wonderfully alive and humorous seventeenth century English slipware of Thomas Toft and his contemporaries.'

On her return from overseas Pip commenced a Diploma in Ceramic Design at the Adelaide College of the Arts and Education. It was as early as her first year there that she

'Mere Ubu Swimming', diam 30.5 cm

'Mere Ubu et Amie à la Bouffe;, diam 46 cm

'Mere Ubu et Claudette en Egypte', diam 47 cm

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'Au Parc de Lune', dia 43 cm

'Green', diam 40 cm

'Au Parc de Lune', detail, 1983

'Green', detail, 1983

became 'addicted' to slip trailing. 'It was as much from the excitement of using such a fluid, deliciously edible-looking medium as from its obvious pictorial possibilities,' she recalls. 'The difficulties and frustrations of negotiating the chaos of a dozen different coloured slips and trailing vessels (rubber enema bottles with glass pipettes are excellent) are for me well outweighed by the wide range of colours and the spontaneous quality of earthenware slip.'

After two years of trial and error experimentation Pip was able to develop a successful combination of clay bodies, glazes, colourants, slip consistency and trailing techniques. She uses lustres over a clear fritted lead glaze to highlight the features and to emphasise the reflective nature of the glaze.

While overseas, Pip lived for six months in a little mountain village in the heart of Catalonia, just a few hours from Barcelona. There she became familiar with nearly all the works of architect Antoni Gaudi who had practised in the region until his death in 1926. Gaudi's highly decorative style and his feeling for colour, flowing lines, mosaic patterns and sparkling reflected surfaces suggested a series of plates depicting buildings and surrounding scenes all based on his works. The idea of the flat decorated surface remained with Pip and was developed during her ceramics design course. 'The idea and actual process of decoration have always attracted me more than throwing or handbuilding,' says Pip. 'Although I occasionally make teapots and bowls depicting scenes of journeys around the pot, I find large plates the best surfaces for complicated slip trailing and the best forms to suggest strong fluid designs.'

The idea of a series of connected designs also remained and Pip began work on her 'Mère Ubu' plates. The Mère Ubu personality is derived from a character of the same name who appears in the Ubu series of plays by the French absurdist poet and playwright Alfred Jarry. Pip was struck by the power and ambiguity of this somewhat menacing figure and attempted to convey something of Mère Ubu's unrestrained vitality in a contemporary context. 'Jarry developed a highly exaggerated grand guignol form of black theatre,' explains Pip, 'and there remains in my Mère Ubu more than a touch of the bizarre and melodramatic shrew. She is something of a suburban Lady Macbeth who is nevertheless purposefully vulgar and assertive, and who takes delight in affronting accepted, stereotyped values.'

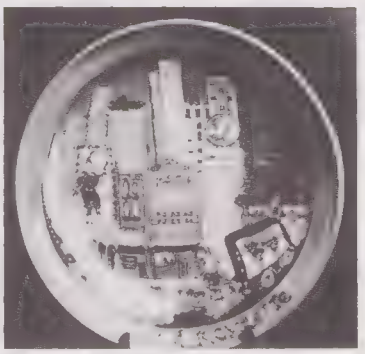
Pip's involvement in feminist issues was very much an influence in her choice of such a strong and energetic female character. The use of ambiguity and the displacement of an image from its traditional context are also features of the series, and these Pip employs deliberately for visual, satirical and whimsical effects.

Pip has recently established a workshop and kiln in Alice Springs where the remarkable landscape of central Australia has once again affirmed her love of intense colour. She is currently preparing for an exhibition in Perth and her work reveals a continued fascination with the everyday domestic inanities and cultural institutions of suburban Australian living. 'My designs feature anthropomorphised Australian animal characters,' says Pip. 'But Mère Ubu still lingers in the depths of my imagination and I expect her to reappear in an exotic jungle series.'

K. L.

'Parque Güell';, diam 41.5 cm

'Mere Ubu à la Campagne'



'Mère Ubu a Bicyclette'

'Magicienne Extraordinaire — Ubini The Great', diam 49.5 cm

Scott Avery

Photography by Marie Allen

Scott Avery

'Dune', 55 x 40 cm

'Rozella Fright', detail

'Delabole Slate Quarry Study 7', 55 x 39 cm

My present work consists of small hand-sized objects and large platters, bowls and wall panels. This creates diverse mental and physical demands as each form is differently stimulating and a variety of my energies goes to each. There is a considerable amount of cross-fertilisation between them, however, as one process or concept will spark a thought for another work area.

To talk about the development of my work I find it easiest to use the analogy of a river system that starts as a youthful headwater and steadily grows to a larger river, taking in different tributaries and meandering slowly and decisively before eventually meeting the sea. Often momentous events, be they people, places or experiences, can divide the stream, and one branch might become a stagnant pool while the other goes on and increases in volume with the addition of a tributary, for instance.

In this way the life of an artist can be likened to a river system; the processes of life and experiences cultivate the individual who develops them and contributes to them his or her chosen medium.

Recently there have been two major "tributaries" that have added considerably to my work. The first of these is the work of Mark Boyle, an English artist whose exhibition, 'Journey to the Surface of the Earth', was shown during the 1980 Adelaide Festival of Arts. On further study I was entertained and awed by this artist's (and by his family's) total involvement in their life as their art. In the mid nineteenth century John Ruskin wrote that 'The whole function of the artist is to be a seeing and feeling creature', and Mark Boyle has explicitly used this approach, accepting reality as it is and documenting it accordingly.

A second influence has been the work and teaching of Douglas Fuchs, the 1981 Crafts Council Fellow. Doug has

'Port Willunga Jetty', 53 x 38 cm

'Mud Flat Study', detail of below

an inclination for natural fibre materials found in the local environment and seeks to use the qualities of these found objects in conceptual structures. The culmination of his residency in Adelaide was 'Floating Forest', a monumental fibre environment. The use of such materials made me see familiar things in a new light, as material, design, colour and texture.

Experiment and experience build a palette that the potter works with — in my case clays, earths, cellulose materials, glazes and salts. I work with a wood burning kiln; the particular characteristics of wood firing stimulate my imagination. The power of heat and flame transform, pattern, texture and colour the work in a way that is not directly controlled by human hand, and hence there is a feeling of partnership with the kiln which is alive with its own personality.

Illustrated here is a series of wall panels which show an endeavour to attribute importance and an aesthetic to areas and places that are often seen as scars or wastelands. For example, the disused slate quarries close to where I live have no inspiring visual component but they are an historical record of the area's pioneering white settlement and its early architecture and sociology. Similarly, the 'Mud Flat' series consists of life-size representation of observations of low-lying, swampy mud flat areas that have their own aesthetic compared with the swamp as a whole. By recreating them in my own medium it is like being able to take home a chunk of the earth without leaving a void from where it came.

I see so much around our immediate environs that is related to the ceramic medium — from hills of old metamorphic rock, to soft earth valley deposits easily weathered by heavy rains and winter seas. All are "fired" by geological time. I believe this to be true not only of my world, the world of Adelaide's coast, plain and hills, but of everybody's world.

Scott Avery

'Mud Flat Study', 42 x 35 cm

Dorothy Watson

Evening dress with matching bag

Appliqued vest

DOROTHY Watson is a 1980 graduate of the Associate Diploma of Visual Arts course, offered by Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education, Brisbane. One of her instructors there labelled her a 'poet in gabardine'; a title which fits her well, as gabardine is one of her favourite fabrics for the textile work she does using stitchery and applique. She likes the feel and weave of gabardine and the choice of earth tones available in the cloth; it also contrasts well with another of her favourite fabrics, satin. By exploiting the contrasts and using subtle colour changes she is able to express her fascination with natural forms very beautifully.

Dorothy began her career as a primary school teacher but, when the urge to travel came, she decided to take jobs which not only supplied her with money but also plenty of interesting experiences. To see New Zealand she became a "rouseabout" in a shearing shed. Then there was the tobacco farm where she participated, through hard labour, in the entire life cycle of the tobacco plant. A year's travel in Canada introduced her to the patchwork quilt as an everyday fact of life. Her mother is Canadian and Dorothy remembers her as someone who always wanted to be an artist but, as a mother of six children, she expressed this desire through the decoration of her children's clothing, especially through her embroidery skills. It was this influence, plus the Canadian trip, which Dorothy feels really kept her in the fibre area. She had tried many media before,

Collar with matching bag

Shoulder bag with floral motifs

Dress with applique design and bag

Dress with landscape design

Cushion, applique and embroidery

but it was now patchwork which captured her imagination. Fabric gave her just the result she needed to portray nature.

A full-time course with a textile emphasis was what she next decided to do. The college course was structured so that students were introduced to two main areas of textile study in their first year. They could continue to divide their time similarly in the final year, or specialise. Dorothy wanted to pursue her machine stitchery and applique methods so remained in the 'Applied Textiles' area for her second year. Gradually, she developed the style that now characterises her work, in which the forms and colours of native fauna are a major theme. Flowers are especially satisfying to her in designing her pieces, as they can be expressed as the blossoms, buds, fruit or leaves. Marvellous interpretations of nature are possible with a combination of embroidery and applique she feels, and in her subjective response to natural forms Dorothy's work refects this conviction with remarkable artistry. Design has always been her foremost consideration; once she has the visual effect she desires, the colours seem to fall into place.

Evening bag with padded floral motif

She also decided that functional items were the best means of conveying her designs and because of this she is particularly attentive to the finish of her pieces so that they will last the user a long time. The idea of being able to live with the textiles in an intimate, everyday sense is what she hopes is part of the pleasure of owning one of her cushions, vests or handbags.

Dorothy attended the 'Emerging Craftsmen' conference held in Melbourne in 1980 under the auspices of the Crafts Council of Australia and the Crafts Board. She found this an inspiring meeting, particularly since the problems of survival as a textile artist concern her very much. Since graduating from the ADVA course, she has been finding her way with her work — 'a very personal search', she comments. She finds it discouraging at times, but gradually she has established outlets appropriate to her work. One of these is 'Australian Craftworks' in The Rocks area of Sydney. She has also been invited regularly to take part in the 'Second Skin' exhibition of wearables in Canberra and has also had a number of commissions. One of her pieces was acquired by the Queensland Art Gallery for their 'Survey of Contemporary Craft' in 1982.

Nevertheless, she feels it is "option-examining" time. Finding a supplementary income source may be necessary; for example, being a craftsman-in-residence. She would also very much like to travel again and to do more study. The idea of working together with other craftspeople in a craft community also appeals to her. As her work is rather solitary she finds she longs for the stimulation of working together with other people in similar pursuits — a benefit of her student days.

Dorothy would also like her textile designs to continue to expand and develop. Being identified with a style is very useful, both in terms of making sales and in production methods. What she has presently achieved however, remains a very satisfying product which has the appearance of a "contemporary antique".

Janet De Boer

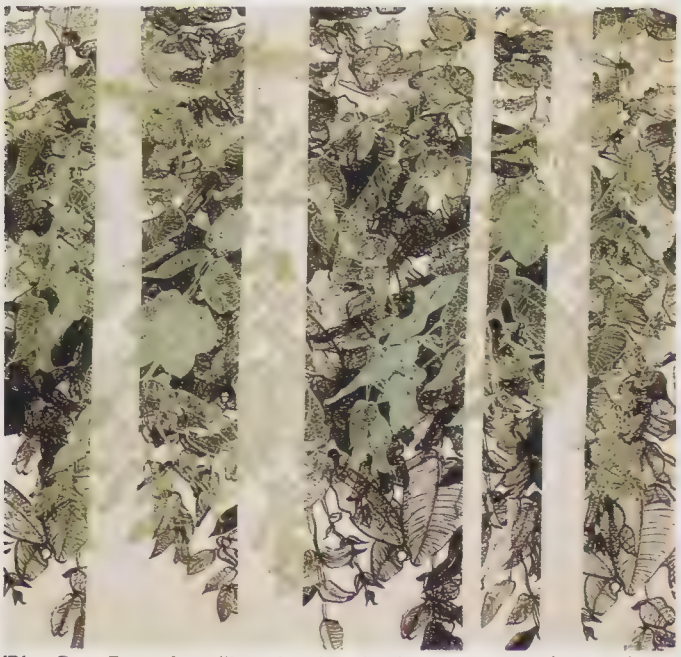
Janet De Boer is Secretary of The Australian Forum for Textile Arts and editor of their magazine, 'Fibre Forum'. She is also President of the Crafts Council of Queensland.

Clutch bag with bird motifs

Shoulder bag with landscape design

Rita Hall at the Hilton

Photography by Grant Handcock



'Blue Gum Forest', wallhanging, hand-printed on velvet (section)

Majestic, stalking emus overlooking the staircase, Hilton International

RITA Hall's masterful printmaking on velvet which is now enlivening the Grand Ballroom foyers at the new Hilton International Adelaide is proof, if any were needed, that she has reached a new high in her chosen medium.

The Hilton commission, in company with names like Olsen, Coburn, Pickering and Hjorth, has been a well deserved coup, a firm foot on the international ladder. The burden of 'Rita who?' begins to lighten although she says, 'I want to be taken seriously. I still feel I'm not, yet.'

Her velvets have the most impact of any of the Hilton art works. The majestic, stalking birds, mystical grasses and insolent camels imprint deeply on the mind. Lunching downstairs in Herbig's Gum Tree restaurant you look up and catch a quizzical emu eyeing you from above the stairwell. The effect is memorable.

The actual making of the Hilton velvets was accomplished in a rapid burst of activity but there was two years of mental effort. Rita's husband, David Jackson, who is also her manager and amanuensis, in a non-writing sense, saw the architects' board go up on the proposed Hilton site and suggested Rita write and ask if she might have a part in the hotel's interior decor.

'I didn't expect anything to happen and for twelve months, nothing did," she says. 'David and I went to Sydney for the 1981 Craft Expo where I was exhibiting and someone from Davenport, Campbell and Partners, the interior design people, was there. I could only stay two days because our daughter, Anna, was then only ten weeks old, so I missed him. The Davenport Campbell man seemed impressed, but then Clive Nuttall took over the art work side of it and I had to convince him. He had never heard of me but was willing to take a gamble on someone he didn't know.'

Rita's mind took hold of the project as soon as it was in the wind, wrestling with ideas. David said, 'Don't spend too much energy on it. It might never happen.' Meanwhile work had to go on for the thirty craft outlets around Australia, as well as for individual commissions.

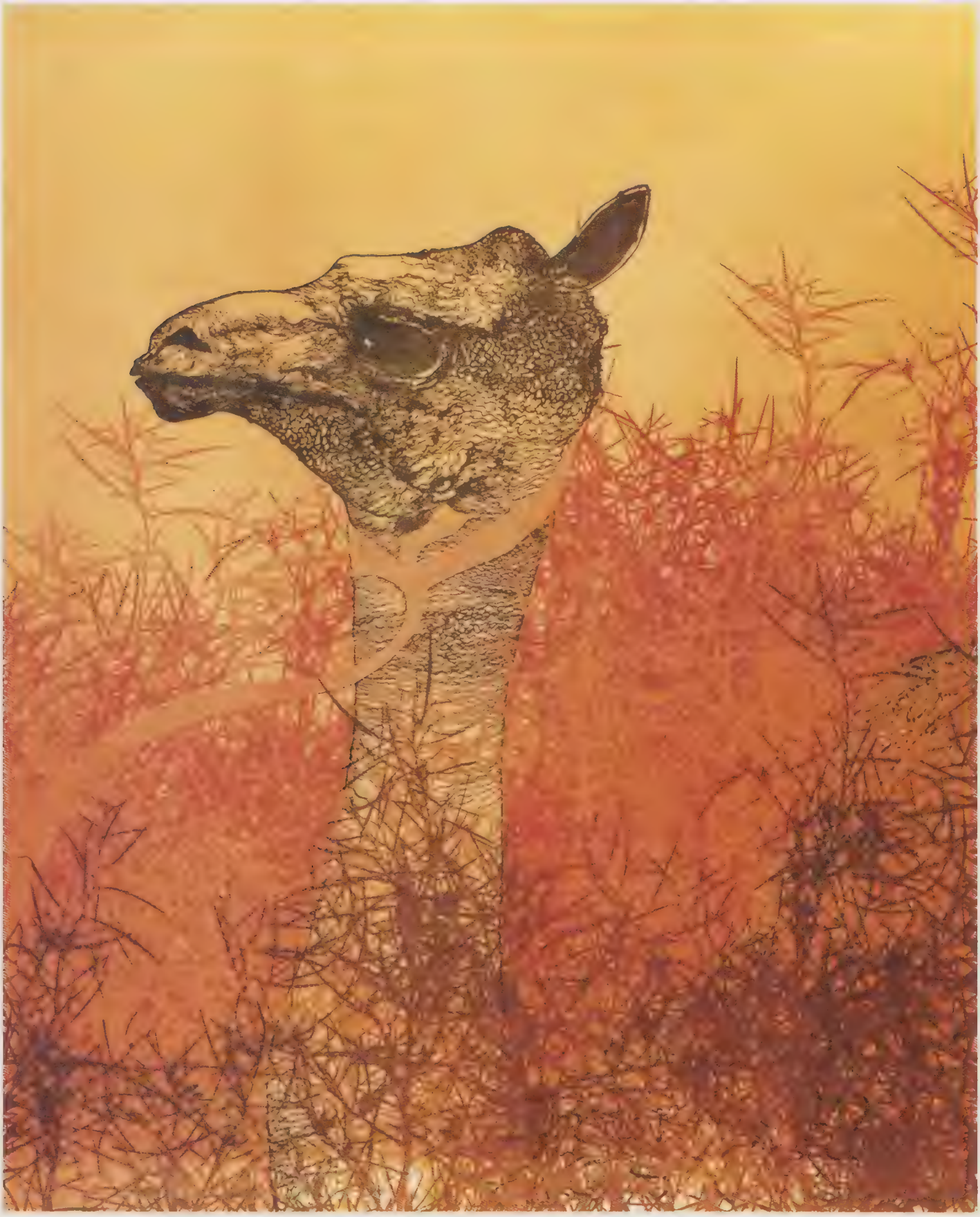
At the beginning of 1982 she was asked to show samples of her work to the hotel's interior designers. She submitted a series of miniature pieces, six inches by six inches, printed on velvet, depicting two of the themes she had in mind — yakkas and an emu. They wrote and said, 'Go ahead.'

Rita went off on a "high". 'The ideas fell into place, but I could think of nothing else. I walked around with a little book, jotting down extra ideas. David cooked all the meals. I hardly saw Anna. I wanted to do something to represent South Australia, although the emus are for all Australia. I went to Cleland Conservation Park to draw them, and the egrets and ibises.

'I had a lot of trouble getting the second emu right. I sketched it in all kinds of positions, even looking at me between its legs. Miles of paper finished up at the dump. Have you ever watched an emu walking? It does a little wobble with each step.' The camels, which she feels are a legitimate part of South Australian fauna, she sketched at Adelaide Zoo.

Her master sketches are done in miniature first, then full-size on rolls of butcher's paper. She uses charcoals, heavy pencils, even bamboo sticks dipped in ink, a new freedom of expression that's been possible since a $3,500 grant from the Crafts Board allowed her to buy a vacuum frame exposure unit for making the silk screens direct from the finished artwork. It gives a faithful reproduction of the finest nuances of the artwork

Striking camel motif, hand-printed on velvet, Grand Ballroom foyer, Hilton International, Adelaide



that wasn't possible when she had to cut the screens with a swivel knife.

The prints were done in special dyes on imported velvets, some German dress velvet bought locally, some ordered in from Holland — Velour d'Elegance, an upholstery velvet which soaks up the dyes in a most satisfying way.

The twenty-eight hangings took seventy metres of fabric, including enough for two spares of each in case of mishap — a wise precaution, as it turned out, because one winter's night condensation from the workroom roof dripped on a finished piece. Another was spoiled when the baby was underfoot and Rita lost concentration.

Rita Hall is by inclination and training a printmaker, although she came to it in a roundabout way. After art school in Adelaide she taught for six years in secondary schools, an era which ended when her first husband, Rodney Hall, an engineer with BHP Whyalla, was killed in a light plane crash.

Rita at the time used to do stunt flying in Pitts Specials and was the first woman in Australia to do so. In a typical reaction to an immediate and stimulating environment, her paintings then were the fish-eye landscapes viewed from the erratic cockpit of a stunt plane. Fleeing Whyalla after the tragedy, she did an advanced diploma in art in Adelaide, majoring in printmaking, and fitted in a work/study tour in Europe in 1976.

With part-time lecturing at DFE and 'doing etching on a little press in the back room' she managed to survive this transitional period. David, who is now indispensable in the scheme of things, turned up as a student in one of her design classes. They married, and even that occasion was remarkable: David was in hospital with a broken leg. 'Afterwards,' Rita says, 'I went home on my own and ate all the cake.'

The bush at Bridgewater, where she set up her workshop after her marriage, has provided a wealth of new ideas. She had early discovered the rewarding flexibility of printing on fabric but was uninspired by the 'bumble bee on a flower' patterns required at art school.

She began to experiment. There emerged a mega-sized banksia cone, a flustered-looking, malevolent creature with a life of its own. Friends used the fabrics for cushions. Encouraged, Rita did her now famous dead-blowfly print. Friends looked horrified. 'The idea of doing a big, blowup blowfly! Stupid!' The astonishment gave her courage.

She did blowups of craneflies, all fronds, tendrils and gauzy wings. Moths that fluttered around the lights became languid, pale creatues printed on misty velvets, very large. Walking back from the shops one day she found a dead blackbird on the road. Fascinated by its extended claw and with an artist's proper priorities, she took the sliced bread out of its plastic bag and put the bird in, bearing it home.

It became the talking point of Rita's first big one-woman exhibition at Adelaide's Jam Factory early in 1980: the bird, in the disarray of death, surrounded by a flotilla of little skeletal creates like wraiths bearing it to the next world. It was printed on pure cotton velvet and the Art Gallery of South Australia bought it for permanent exhibition.

Rita Hall, who came to Australia from Holland at the age of three, gives us a new perspective of the universe and teaches us, like Blake,

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And heaven in a wildflower

— to which Rita might add, 'a wildflower with some of its petals missing.' Perfection is boring. A shrivelled leaf, a dead grasshopper, offer possibilities.

In her studio she keeps a pinboard of interesting little creatures — wasps, craneflies, cicadas, beetles — to go under the microscope. 'I would like to make images of things I see around me. I am not consciously into Australiana, but the Australiana movement seems to have overtaken me.

'When I see something with possibilities I can keep in my mind the image of how it will be as a completed print. Sometimes it's a bother having to *draw* it. If I had to sit down with a blank piece of paper and work up an idea it would be hopeless.'

So it was that she found the theme for the last of the Hilton hangings while driving in the Adelaide Hills. A strong pattern of leaves and gumtree trunks suddenly imprinted on her inner eye and *voila,* there was the answer to the elusive final idea. She could hardly wait to get home to put it on paper.

These days David does the routine work of emulsifying the screen and exposing it to ultra-violet light in the vacuum frame to produce the stencil. Rita always does the printing, because the placing of the screen is part of the artistic interpretation of the idea.

Paint, squeegied on, reacts chemically with the fabric and sets instantly. Cotton prints go into a drying cabinet but not the velvets, which would crease.

The heavy squeegying has produced acute tenosynovitis in Rita's wrists at times, and after a long session of work she may have a sore neck. The velvets are hand-stitched by expert needlewomen. Rita used to sit up late into the night trying to do it herself, but the results weren't encouraging. 'You could see the stitch marks and the hangings had wobbly edges,' she says. 'Like all technical jobs, it's best to pay someone who does it well.'

She prefers to work on velvet because of the rich, almost three-dimensional effect it produces. Velvets are always one-offs and in special commissions the screens, as with the Hilton job, are then cancelled immediately.

It is becoming a prestige thing to have a Rita Hall and the international traffic through the Hilton is going to spread the word. Enquiries are already coming from Hong Kong and New York. The ordinary poor can have a cotton print, just as bold and beautiful, for $50 to $90 from a gallery outlet, and even these are restricted to numbered editions, usually about fifty.

In the early days Rita used to go around the design shops with her innovative banksia, blowflies and craneflies in a suitcase, 'trying to flog them off'. There was a depressing lack of enthusiasm. It might have been easier in trendy Sydney, perhaps; but things are different now, even in South Australia. Her work has become its own signature.

'I hear blowflies are appearing as designs on handbags,' she says. 'It seems I have made them respectable. Probably my work is different because I never look at other people's for ideas. Intellectual arrogance, I guess.'

Rita Hall is represented in most of Australa's State galleries, the National Gallery, Canberra, and several big regional galleries.

Gwen Lyle

Gwen Lyle is a freelance journalist living in the environs of Adelaide where she runs a small farm and breeds Angora and Cashmere goats.

'FABRIC AND FORM'

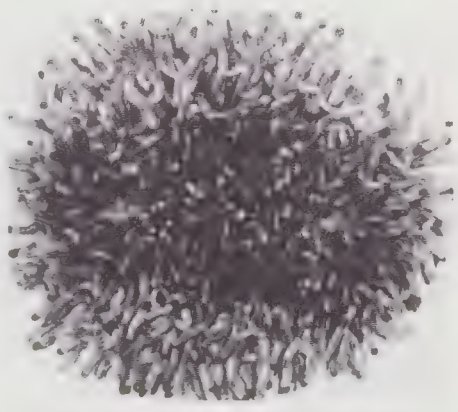
Photography by Janet de Boer

Richard Smith, 'Threesquare 2', 1975. Three canvasses, each 174 cm square (British Council Collection). Left: *Barbara Brown, machine-knitted scarf in wool, 1981; 232 x 57 cm.* Below: *Tadek Beutlich, 'Three Diamonds', 1981. Suspended tapestry structure, esparto grass bound with wool and sisal, 72 x 82 cm*

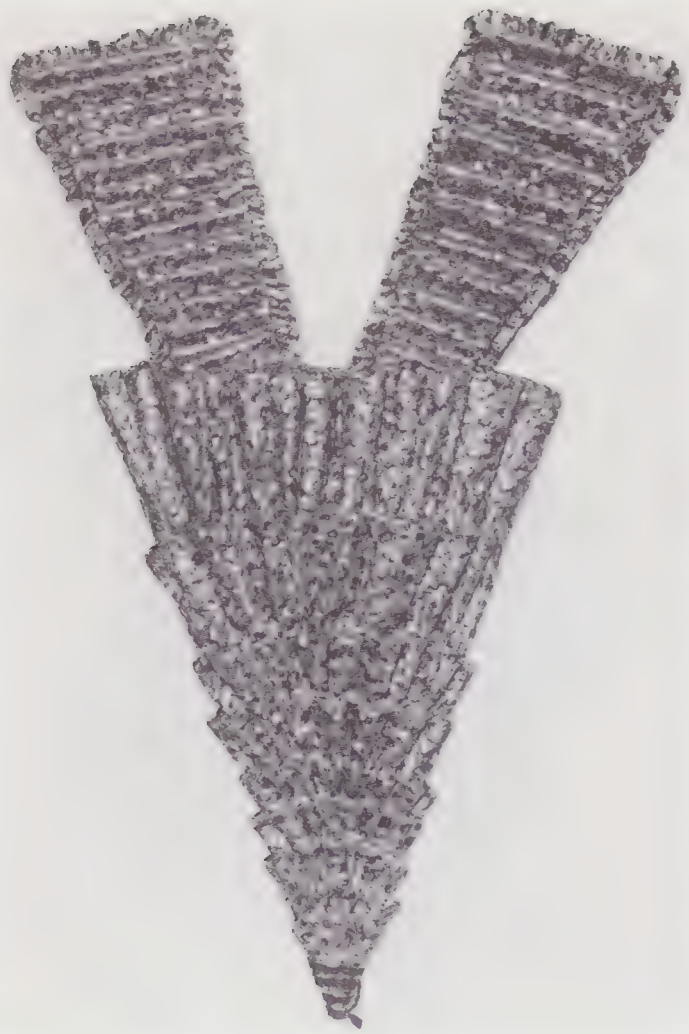
TWELVE British artists are represented in this exhibition, which commenced its tour of Australia at the new Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) in Brisbane during Festival '82. The critique of an exhibition should mention its presentation, that is, how it was displayed and its accompanying catalogue — and in this case we were even offered up the selector himself, Michael Brennand-Wood. The Education Division of QAG organised two days of seminars with speakers from many fibre areas, and from all over Australia. It was especially appropriate to have this eclecticism, with the controversial 'Fabric and Form' in our midst, with 'Costumes and Masks of the Commonwealth' showing in another section of the Gallery, and with the amount of Australian textile work shown in the 'Survey of Contemporary Craft', an exhibition which displayed the basis of QAG's craft acquisitions.

I mention all of this because a considerable amount of the impact of 'Fabric and Form' relates to its context in the current Australian textile and art scene.

The Art Gallery displayed 'Fabric and Form' to very good effect, and I was pleased that

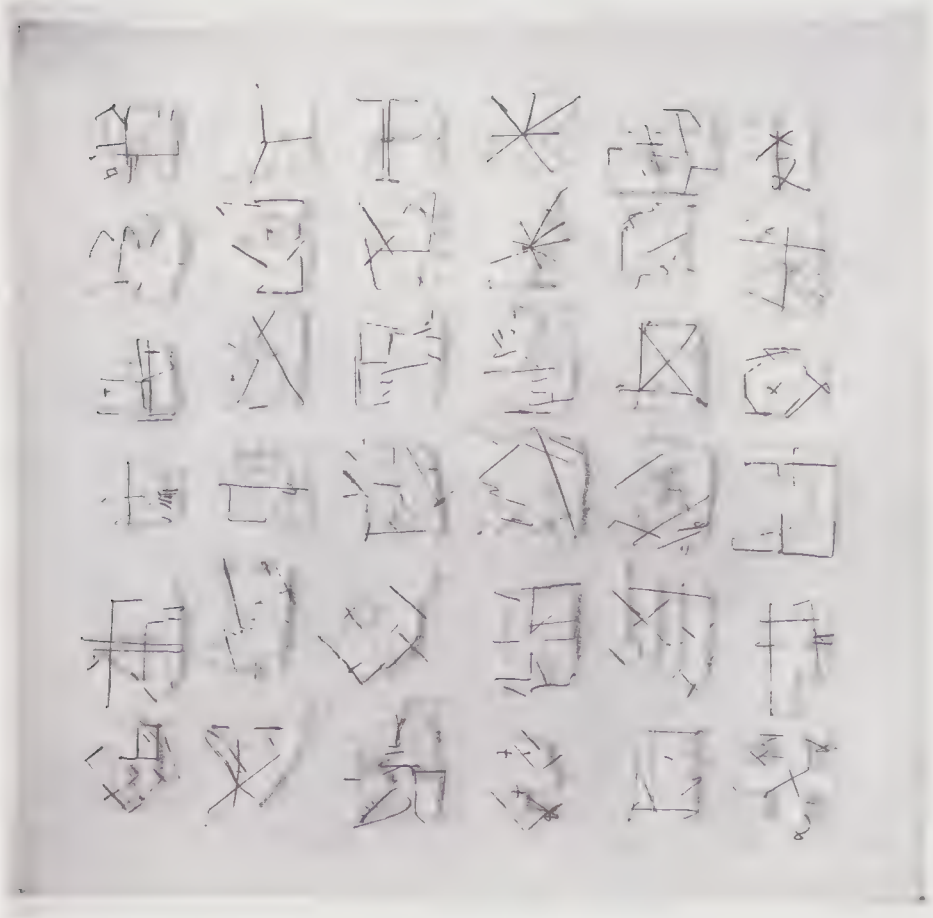


Michael Brennand-Wood had been able to see the work installed as he wanted. A number of the pieces were quite powerful, and needed careful display. And there was also a flow of concepts that can be exploited by the way one section leads to the next. In fact the contrast between this area and the overcrowded 'Survey of Contemporary Craft' was strong. (However, now that fewer major exhibitions are running concurrently the QAG has been able to remedy the problem.)



Di Livey, 'Hyde Park Corner', 1981. Canvas on wooden base, acrylic and cardboard, 147 x 96 cm

Danielle Keunen, '36 Instalments', 1981. Paint and thread on organdie, 102 x 105 cm



The catalogue was also very well presented. There were two pages for each artist, all pieces were shown in colour, and the facts about each artist were easily grasped but did not detract from the visual imagery. In short, it was a catalogue worth buying, and keeping. A chair appeared in each photograph of the artist's work, which suggested the scale of the works, and the unseen viewer as well.

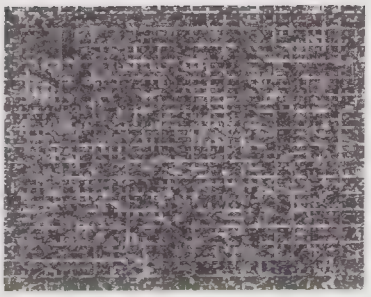
Michael Brennand-Wood was soft spoken during the Seminars but firm in his intent. He stressed that there are dynamic themes, impulses and directions in our contemporary culture that should inform our art, and which people working with textiles should feel challenged to explore. He called for more "physically aggressive work". In the exhibition catalogue he says of his selection, 'I sought strong ideas, I wanted to be challenged and confronted with something of which I had previously been unaware'. Those words reflect the reviewer's own attitude when attending major art exhibitions of any sort. I had not realised that artists using, or creating, textiles in Britain today were going to confront me to the degree found in "Fabric and Form". Apart from the pieces which get into British *Crafts* magazine, the contemporary textiles there do not have a vehicle for good exposure. I feel the exhibition benefitted greatly by having Michael Brennand-Wood's sensitivity and his demand that the work must be challenging.

For people who find this approach to textiles disconcerting, even incomprehensible, his introduction to the catalogue is a very fair statement of his intent. He comments, 'The type of work the average textile student is exposed to now is vastly different from that of a few years ago. Certainly the guest speakers and panel members of the Art Gallery's Seminar presented a very eclectic approach. But it was possible for each to be informed by the integrity of approach and the visual impact of 'Fabric and Form.'

I have found textile art in Australia tends to be much gentler in its message than a great deal of what I have seen in America. I would also refer to the East European countries, and to Poland in particular, as a source of tremendously powerful works in, and "about", textile media (a distinction Mr. Brennand-Wood makes). That is not necessarily a criticism of Australia, nor is it true in all cases, by any means. Each country has its own urgencies and its own textile heritage to convey. What Australia recognises it needs, with its isolation, is an awareness of what can be done, and is being done, of how far the perimeters can extend. 'Fabric and Form' is certainly an exhibition that tells us something about those ideas. The works are strong enough, professional

Ingunn Skoghoff, 'Through a Blue Door', 1981. Tapestry weave in linen, wool and artifical fibres, 190 x 144 cm. (Crafts Council of Queensland Collection)

Right: *Michael Brennand-Wood, 'Trailing Colours', 1981. Wooden mesh, painted and stained with acrylics, threaded with silk fabrics, stitched with cotton thread and wire, 120 x 143 cm*



Michael Moon, 'Insulating Jacket', 1978. Acrylic on mouldes, unbleached calico, 117 x 231 cm

enough, and exciting enough to live on in our imaginations. They are fortunately also diverse enough that they will not capture and strangle the imagination with one approach.

For more "words" on 'Fabric and Form' the reader is referred to the November/ December 1982 issue of *British Crafts*, which has three full pages of attack and defence of the exhibition. But it would be much better to be sitting in that empty chair, shown in the catalogue, looking and perhaps experiencing the "healthy uncertainty" that Brennand-Wood writes of: 'The exhibition will present work across a spectrum from what is physically aggressive in scale and approach through to what is almost classical in its conception'.

Artists whose work appears in the exhibition: Stephanie Bergman, Tadek Beutlich, Michael Brennan-Wood, Barbara Brown, Diana Harrison, Danielle Keunen, Di Livey, Michael Moon, Mary Restieaux, Ingunn Skoghoff, Richard Smith, and Katherine Virgils.

Janet De Boer

The 'Fabric and Form' exhibition will be shown in all states: Darwin, January-February 1983; Perth, February to March 1983; Adelaide, April 1983; Launceston, May-June 1983; Melbourne, August 1983; Sydney, September-October 1983. The exhibition was selected by Michael Brennand-Wood on behalf of the British Crafts Council.

Stephenie Bergman, 'Rag Merchant', 1977. Dyed and sewn cotton duck, 173 x 203 cm (British Council Collection)

'COLD COMFORT' QUILTS

Hogarth Gallery, Sydney, 27 Nov.- 11 Dec. 1982

HOW is it possible for two strongly distinctive personalities, each with a wealth of experience and progressive development in her craft behind her, to work together towards an exhibition of almost a dozen major fabric works? Is "A" responsible for the design and does "B" follow on tamely, completing the mechanical, routine work? Does "B" initiate, counterbalanced by "A"s experience and reputation, or are the hundreds of decisions that contribute to the completion of each work shared equally? Design, fabric choice, colour, detail — the idea of a partnership in such critical areas is daunting.

These were some of the questions I asked myself as I threaded my way through lanes and by-ways to reach the Hogarth Gallery to view the exhibition called 'Cold Comfort' Quilts, by Dawn Fitzpatrick and Prue Socha, quilts demanding attention as wall hangings.

I found no answers to my questions in the pieces on display because they seemed to me to have a vitality, a boldness and a unit which could only come from a sound partnership. One may surmise that the initiative came from Dawn Fitzpatrick as we recall her exciting 'Melbourne Cup' fabric collage which hangs so effectively in the Main Lobby of the Hilton Hotel in Sydney, her 'Old Parliament House' in the new N.S.W. Parliament House building in Sydney, and the noteworthy 'Presidents' Wives' which is at present in the United States of America and where it is likely to be on permanent display in one of the major public museums.

'Commodore Perry'

Prue Socha's craft as an embroideress is well known both in Australia and in New Zealand where she has visited and taught on three occasions at the invitation of the Association of N.Z. Embroiderers' Guilds. Her exhibition of landscapes at the Seasons Gallery, North Sydney in 1982 (shown with work by Inga Hunter and Shirley Darby) was widely appreciated. Prue's embroidery pieces are beautifully controlled, her adventurous use of texture within a more traditional framework and her disciplined handling of thread in the detail of a work is exemplary.

'Pug Heritage Quilt'

The body of work exhibited looked impressive as a whole. The Hogarth Gallery, with large areas of white brick wall to be covered, was an excellent venue for the "found" collection of scraps of silk, cotton, wool and other fibres that came together to illuminate the gallery. The nine larger works were loosely linked through a delicate Eastern influence (both women visited the Orient within the last year or so).

'The Warrior', a fierce Samurai in aggressive pose, has in contrast a cream magnolia flower at his feet. 'Commodore Perry', the American naval officer who unlocked the gateway into a sealed-off Japan is shown on another quilt accompanied by his two interpreters and two of the sea captains of the "task force" that had such a cataclysmic effect on the Japanese nation. The 'Pug Heritage Quilt' is composed of mellowed, much used, much loved fabrics as a background screen and sitting in front of it one smug pug (almost impossible not to pat).

The traditional Japan is beautifully realised in 'The Journey'; this journey was to the ancient capital of Kyoto by land and by water. In contrast, with delightful humour, is 'Cricket at the Hong Kong Club'. Until recently one memory of crowded Hong Kong was of that bright green patch of lawn dedicated to the noble game of cricket set in the centre of the tallest buildings in the Crown Colony. It was quite something to see the flanneled fools sweating it out on the manicured cricket pitch. In this quilt, two of the noble cricketers stand "at the ready"; behind them, but faintly, are the skyscrapers of modern money-mad Hong Kong.

'The Clay Men' is a hanging inspired by the excavations in Sian, North-West China, of the amazing warriors and horses now housed in the Chin Shi Huang Mausoleum. A small exhibition from the Sian Mausoleum is now touring Australian Art Galleries and one can only be grateful for the generosity of the Chinese government in permitting such treasures to travel. It is likely that 'The Clay Men' quilt will be acquired by the recently established N.S.W. Art Gallery Foundation so that it may be a welcome addition to the collection of the Sydney Art Gallery and a permanent reminder of a noteworthy touring exhibition.

Incidentally, 'Cold Comfort' to my knowledge was not reviewed in the press and scarcely advertised, yet the two artists together were saying something of importance and with force. However, a number of the pieces were sold and will hang in public and private collections.

Ida Lea

Ida Lea is a member of the Embroiderers' Guild of NSW and the Creative Embroidery Association.

'The Warrior'

'The Clay Men', inspired by the excavations in Sian, North-West China. An exhibition of these figures, entitled 'The Entombed Warriors' is presently touring Australia

'The Journey'

'STURTWOOD'

Mittagong, N. S. W., 26 Mar.-17 April, 1983

THE Sturtwood invitational woodcraft exhibition was conceived from the desire to give Greg Aggs, who recently finished a period as trainee in the wood workshop at Sturt, an opportunity to exhibit his work. I was also aware of a number of expert woodcraftsmen who had recently arrived in Australia from England and Italy, but who had not had an opportunity to exhibit their work.

This exhibition offered an excellent opportunity for me to combine an exhibition for Greg with an exhibition of work by these expert newcomers, as well as inviting several other Australian woodcraftsmen whose making and design skills were of a standard which I personally admired.

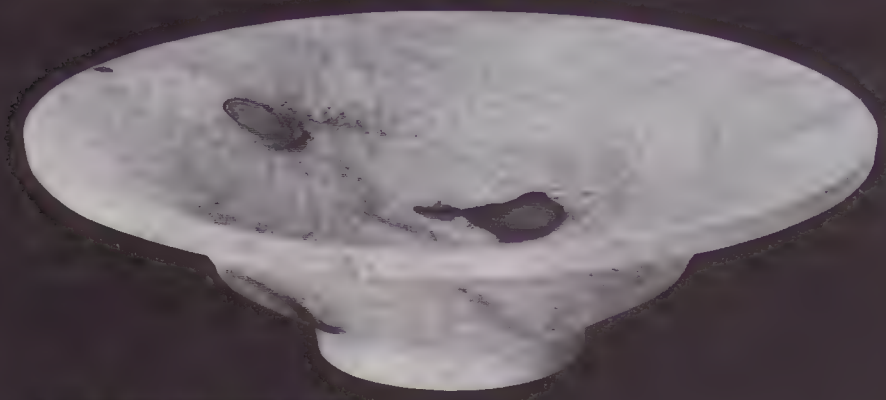
As a furniture craftsman myself, I know how difficult it can be to find galleries willing to exhibit furniture. Because of the large size and price of much furniture,

John Allan, 'Dancing Spiral', music stand, 1983

George Ingham, chair, walnut, 1983

Greg Aggs, chair, blue gum, 1983

David Upfill-Brown, carved chair, jarrah, 1983



Mike Darlow, large bowl in Bhutan Cypress, 1983

Bernard Gay, Mandala wall panel, inlay, 1982

quick sales, or any sales at all, at exhibitions are by no means guaranteed, so galleries are reluctant. I therefore feel a responsibility in my position at Sturt, where I have the facility to organise exhibitions, along with my own making responsibilities, to give my fellow furniture craftsmen an opportunity to exhibit their work, an opportunity denied by the commercial responsibilities of most galleries.

The pieces presented by the craftsmen lived up to my expectations in every way. The workmanship was of a very high standard with pieces ranging from Bernard Gay's traditional inlays to George Ingham's ultra-modern table and chairs. Merv Gray's pieces displayed his incredible ability to combine the rough-weathered surfaces of nature with the fine hand-rubbed surfaces imparted by the craftsman. Merv's work contrasted with the obvious English contemporary influence of David Upfill-Brown's finely crafted chairs and mirror.

The contrast in the work of these two woodworkers shows quite dramatically against our own indigenously trained or self-taught craftsmen and those who have been trained in England. David's work is beautifully made and finished yet it shows a rigidity and traditional conformity which is born of a training based on a very long woodworking tradition. Merv's work however, while just as finely crafted, owes nothing to tradition but derives entirely from our natural environment, striving to maintain the natural beauty of nature and interfering only to an extent required to impart the craftsman's individuality to the piece.

Certainly the exhibition with its mixture of influences and styles, combined with the general excellent standard of workmanship, augers well for the future of Australian woodcraft.

Peter Adams

Richard Raffan, bowl, horizontal scrub, 1983

GALLERY PROFILE

Promoting an intelligent approach to art and craft in a comfortable environment

CANBERRA Beaver Galleries presents two and three dimensional works of art. In fulfilling this aim the gallery is participating in a disarmingly complex enterprise that must at one and the same time operate within existing market relationships and create its own philosophy specifically related to the requirements of art and craft.

Whatever the commodity, the present-day consumer is increasingly alienated from the products he or she depends upon for sustenance and pleasure. We must discern a product's value not from the product itself, and at times not from the manufacturer, but from a third party whose job is to tell us what we are getting and what we should want. The alienation process has gone so far that now we have recourse to a fourth party in the guise of consumer protection interests — they advise us on what advice to believe. So in the end the consumer has little choice but to give in and be seduced by the packaging.

While art craft has yet to be subjected to such market organisation, and heaven forbid it should be looked upon solely as a market commodity, there is no escaping the fact that it is in some very important ways subject to the consumer/product network, crude and unaesthetic as that may sound. The concept is more readily understood and acceptable when embodied in the traditional image of the fine art dealer who becomes patron and promoter for the artists he represents, and aspires to a social as well as a commercial role.

The directors of Beaver Galleries, Betty and Ron Beaver, are conscious of the potential their enterprise has for building a supportive network for the producer and the consumer, and for promoting an awareness of the number of ways of looking at and enjoying art craft in its many forms.

Founding director, Betty Beaver, was aware of the difficulties that could work against creating a useful environment, all of which seem to materialise if the gallery begins to sell a commodity rather than develop the social relationship between artist, gallery and public, or when insufficient attention is paid to the quality of work presented.

In the years following its foundation, the Gallery expanded from an emphasis on what was traditionally understood as "the crafts" to a broader concept encompassing visual art forms in a wide variety of media.

When Ron Beaver joined the Gallery team as co-director in 1977, the Gallery was developing its interests to include sculpture, paintings and prints as well as traditional crafts. This period also saw the extension of the Gallery premises to its current format, incorporating a foyer display, exhibitions gallery, sculpture and woodcraft gallery, crafts gallery and sculpture courtyard.

These specialised gallery spaces allow the directors to present a wide selection of work

created from different points of view, ranging from functional production ware to pieces more typically classified as fine art such as watercolours and sculpture. As a gallery's philosophy can be developed through the various methods used in presenting work, this physical arrangement is important. Ideally a piece of craft is its own best defence, yet this is only true when the consumer has sufficient practice in looking and discerning. Gallery presentation is one way of encouraging the public to look at the work from an informed viewpoint. As craftspeople have various attitudes towards their work, it would seem logical to assume that craft presentation would also vary to suit individual work, different media and different sorts of exhibitions.

The gallery thus becomes an important mediator between the artist and the community, and can develop particular philosophies that will influence the one's

opinion of the other. Beaver Galleries' philosophy is put into practice by showing a broad range of media within one year's program, a broad range of artists, both interstate and local, known and not so well known, and flexibility in the size and style of exhibition.

As the director responsible for the Gallery's aesthetic standards, Betty Beaver spends much time in personal discussion with the craftspeople and artists whose work the Gallery will present. As exhibitions can be organised up to two years in advance, they must be based on a feel for the work rather than specific examples for display.

The Gallery's exhibitions program constructively reinforces the philosophy of bringing work to the public in an informative way, and incorporates a number of special exhibitions which have become regular yearly features.

One such exhibition is the Beaver Galleries Award. It is an invitation exhibition entailing an award to the value of $500, and focuses on a different medium for each show. An independent selector is invited to choose work for acquisition up to the value of the award, which then becomes part of the Beaver Galleries Collection. The artist benefits from a venue which presents professional quality work and the prospect of acquisition, while the public benefits by having access to such exhibitions of high calibre.

The 'Second Skin Exhibition' has also become a feature of the Gallery's annual program. It is held in autumn and presents a collection of wearable garments intended to foster an awareness of art clothing. Again, while providing a useful venue for participating artists, it also presents the public with an enjoyable and understandable sample of art clothing possibilities.

In addition to the above exhibitions, Beaver Galleries has developed a reputation for presenting exhibitions of high quality woodcraft and was in fact responsible for the first complete wood exhibition of Tasmanian work in an art craft gallery venue.

The directors say that their greatest satisfaction lies in introducing an artist or craftsperson to the Canberra scene and seeing that relationship grow. They particularly recall their part in introducing the work of sculptor John Robinson to Canberra, including their association with the acquisition of the 'Universe Series' of bronzes and tapestries for Canberra and some larger sculptures for Sydney, Canberra and Mildura.

Beaver Galleries is an establishment with a particular philosophy conducive to promoting an intelligent approach to art and craft in a comfortable environment. There is opportunity for genuine promotion and accessibility, and the Gallery maintains a responsibile role in developing awarenesses between artist, object and public.

Nola Anderson

Nola Anderson is a freelance journalist and accomplished craftsperson (working in pewter) living in Canberra. In October last year she was elected winner of the 1982 Ascraft Writing Award for her series of critical exhibition reviews in *The Canberra Times*.

Announcement of Pre-publication Offer!

THE FIRST
Craft Australia
YEARBOOK 1984

TO BE PUBLISHED IN A LIMITED EDITION EARLY NEXT YEAR
ADVANCE ORDERS NOW BEING TAKEN

THE Crafts Council of Australia is presently compiling the first *Craft Australia* YEARBOOK, to be launched early next year. This exciting new craft publication is the first in a series of beautifully produced annuals that will build year by year into a valuable reference source to complement the quarterly magazine. Each Yearbook will document the activities which occurred within the craft movement during the preceding twelve months, giving particular emphasis to previously unpublished work by established professional craftspeople in Australia. The Yearbook will also feature lively and provocative articles that analyse innovative trends in contemporary crafts and will look at future directions in all major media — fibre, wood, ceramics, glass, metal and so on. Provision will be made for the documentation of outstanding work by emerging craftspeople who are relatively unknown outside their immediate circle. Reviews of major craft exhibitions will also be included.

The Editor of *Craft Australia* regards the Yearbook as a vital adjunct to the growing body of literature on the crafts and a means of ensuring that adequate documentation is maintained in all the major areas.
The quarterly magazine, *Craft Australia,* even with its greatly enlarged format, is unable to keep abreast of the volume of stimulating new material now being offered for publication and without adequate exposure much valuable impetus will be lost. The yearbook aims to publish the best material from this 1983 overflow.

The Yearbook will be printed on superior quality art paper and contain a minimum of 150 pages, many of which will feature superb colour plates of work by master craftsmen. It will be available in both hard cover and soft cover. Volume I will have a limited print run and preference will be given to early orders, so if you are interested in obtaining a copy please ORDER NOW AND AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT.

This prestigeous annual publication is available exclusively to *Craft Australia* subscribers at the special pre-publication prices of $19.50 (hard cover) and $14.50 (soft cover), plus $3.00 for postage and packaging within Australia. This represents a substantial saving on the recommended retail prices of $22 and $19.50 for hard cover and soft cover respectively. Delivery is anticipated in February/April, 1984.

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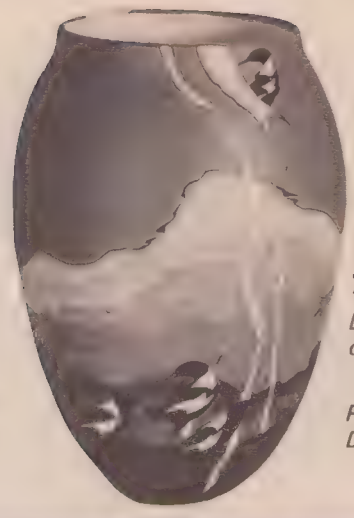


Sony Manning, 'Secrets of a Landscape', green oval jar, ht 26 cm

Photography by Douglas Thompson

FAENZA 1983

Australian representation to the 41st International Competition of Artistic Ceramics. 25th July — 10 October, 1983

FAENZA is a very old, rather small country town in Northern Italy. For many centuries it has been the centre of a flourishing pottery industry, not only because of suitable clay deposits, but because of the calibre of individual potters who have been attracted to work in studios and factories throughout the district.

Faenza is world renown for its impressive ceramic museum founded by Gaetano Ballardino in 1908 and for its international competition, the oldest and most prestigious in the world — the *Concorso internazionale delle ceramica d'arte.*

Each year the concorso attracts the world's leading ceramists to be represented in the huge exhibtion. An international jury selects works to be admitted to the exhibition from those submitted and awards a Faenza Prize, seven Purchase Prizes and Gold Medals. The awarded works remain the property of the Town of Faenza and are exhibited in the Museum of Ceramics.

Australians began competing against the rest of the ceramics world in 1973 when Peter Travis entered his own work and gained the Gold Medal. In 1974 the Crafts Board of the Australia Council provided an annual grant to the Crafts Council of Australia to organise an official entry. Australia's consistent representation over the past nine years is due in no small part to the unflagging co-ordination and administration of Jane Burns, Crafts Council of Australia's Excutive Director.

Australian ceramics has made its mark in Faenza. Gold Medals were won by Col Levy in 1974, Derek Smith, Les Blakebrough and Shigeo Shiga in 1975, Bernard Sahm in 1976, Sandra Taylor in 1977 and Stefan Szonyi in 1979. Purchase prizes were won by Christine O'Loughlin in 1978 and most recently by Mitsuo Shoji in 1982.

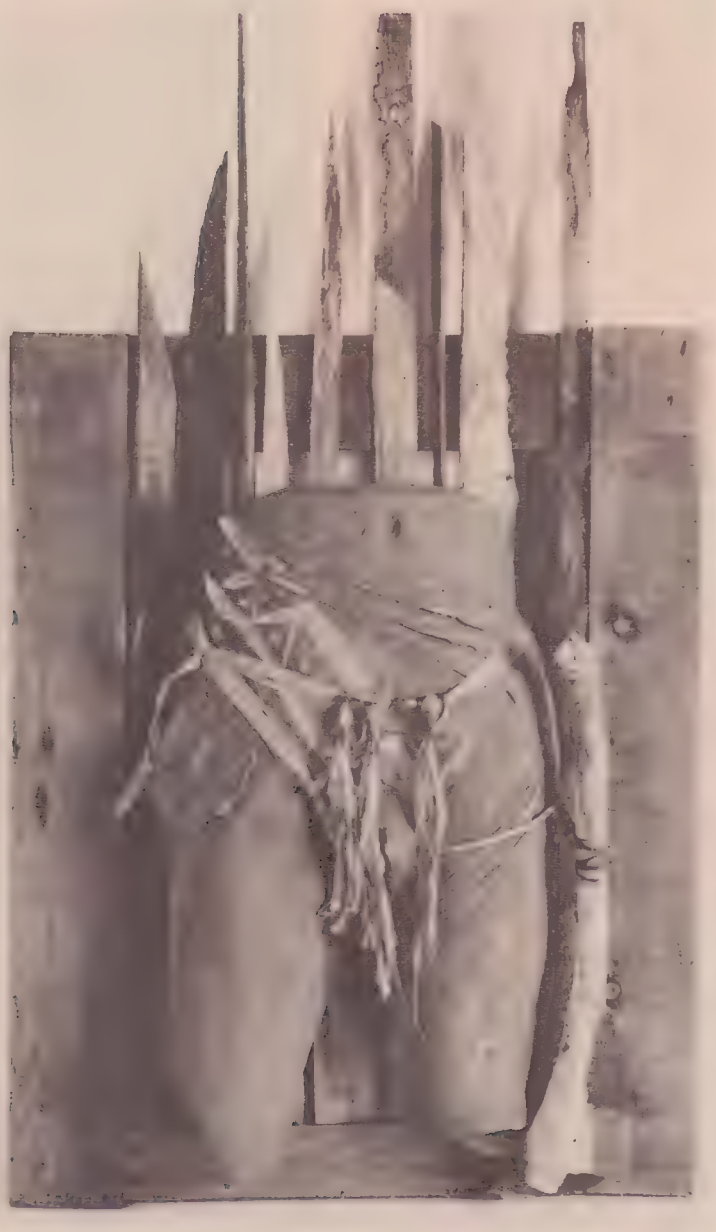
The selectors for the 1983 Faenza Exhibition were Robert Bell, Curator of Craft at the Art Gallery of Western Australia and President of the Crafts Council of Australia, Con Rhee, glass artist and Vice-President of the Crafts Council of Australia, with the assistance of Joy Warren who visited Faenza in 1982. The selection criteria laid down by the Faenza International Jury are inventiveness and expressiveness, research on material, quality of glazes, ability in manufacture, indication of a consistent development in the craft and the most appropriate national representation to an exhibition showing the most outstanding trends in contemporary ceramics.

Guided by these criteria, the selectors have invited five leading ceramists to represent Australia in 1983: James Draper, Peter Hook, Sony Manning, Vincent McGrath and Alan Watt. The fifteen major works (three by each ceramist)

James Draper, 'Untitled,', ceramic form, stoneware

James Draper, 'Untitled', ceramic form, stoneware, coloured slips, 44 x 70 x 35 cm

Alan Watt, 'Incline 2', high-fired earthenware, lustre, second firing, reduction, 47 x 60 x 76cm



Peter Hook, 'Weerong' (raised initiation scars), stoneware form, cast and modelled, oxides and body stains, wood, fibre, 90 x 60cm

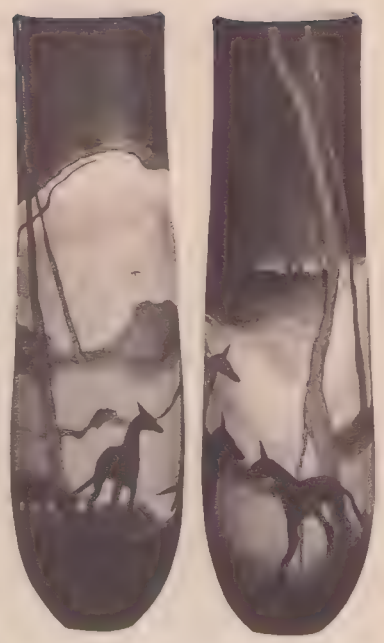
were exhibited very briefly in the Crafts Council's Centre Gallery on 25th — 27th March, 1983 before dispatch to Faenza. As a body of work they certainly indicate significant developments in contemporary Australian ceramics.

James Draper's three bold sculptural forms indicate a fresh and independent approach to form and material, the mass of the form is created by an interplay of simple planes, curves and contours but their conformity is broken by a surprise placement of protrusions, flat planes and openings. While they are formalist works the idiosyncratic shapes, hard lines and pastel colourings conjure up a variety of perceptions and images in the eye of the viewer.

Peter Hook's works continue his concern with social comment and an exploration of our Australianess, in this case, aspects of Aboriginal culture. The two figurative works, based on a male and female torso, incorporate mixed elements and images which strive for the characteristic placement and combination of natural materials in Aboriginal art. A part of one of these works and another explore a new development beyond the figurative: the creation of a mosaic effect where fragments of images — Aboriginal and classical — are placed in a frame. This is an interesting approach. It is not seeking to duplicate Aboriginal art but places Aboriginal images and motifs in a *White* frame of reference — a mosaic of relics and impressions. It seeks to create an empathy and understanding by one outside the culture. They are emotive and expressive works.

Alan Watt's forms continue his concern with abstracted elements of landscape. The fragment sheets of clay placed on obtuse white boxes work on several levels. As formalist works the deliberate placement of black fragments on a white base creates a set of relationships that change as the work is viewed. The fragmented sheets also explore images of landform — inclines, plateaux, escarpments, spurs with encrusted surfaces and crevices. In detail the ceramic sheets have beautiful and subtle tonal and textural variations — matt to lustre with touches of

Peter Hook, 'Yenirbahmeace' (Young Woman), stoneware form, earthenware, lustre, wood, 90 x 60cm



Sony Manning, 'Pair of Black Cylinders', inlaid, low-fired porcelain, ht 31.5cm

burnished bronze. The total work has a strong sense of form, the ceramic components having a weighted quality, sitting heavily on the box and pouring over the edges.

Vincent McGrath from Darwin has contributed three strong works which are extensions of platter/dish forms. They are strong white earthenware forms with bold graphic decoration. The decoration has a superb graphic quality. They are essentially wonderful expressive drawings on a clay tableaux, deeply etched black lines with bold splashes of coloured oxide. The images are quite personal — of characters, places, isolated images of fish or bananas that capture the essence of a personalised cultural scene. Vince is the most expressive Australian ceramist to resolve the relationship between form and decoration, graphic imagery and ceramic material.

Sony Manning is also concerned with the relationship between form and decoration but her works are as fine as Vince's are bold. Her wonderfully controlled porcelain vases and bottles employ a deceptive use of representational depictions of animals, birds and landscape. Stylised and abstracted, her creatures take on the form of symbols in the landscape with a subtle relationship of positives and negatives, recurrent forms in different guises. The quality of the stylised landscape is achieved through a superb use of incised and inlaid coloured metallic oxides. The forms are initially slip cast and the landscape and its horizons are inlaid first with coloured clays. Animal forms and tree trunks are then carved out and inlaid further. This meticulous and controlled way of working produces the precise character of her "microcosm" fantasy landscapes.

The 1983 Faenza selection shows five independent ceramists who have explored personal themes and a control of medium. It augers well for the continued respect for Australia on the international ceramic scene.

Peter Emmett
Gallery Director
Crafts Council Centre Gallery

Vincent McGrath, 'Fishes of San Blas', earthenware, low-fired glazes and oxide stain, 44 x 41 x 12cm

AUSTRALIAN CRAFTS 1983

The Meat Market Craft Centre, Melbourne, 31 March-24 April, 1983

Overall view of the exhibition installation. Below: *Close-up of display area, Meat Market Crafts Centre*

THROUGHOUT April the Meat Market Craft Centre was the focal point for the crafts in Australia. Over one hundred and fifty participants invited from across the country responded by sending one or two exhibits. Most of the various crafts were represented and no-one would have envied the Meat Market's Director, Marjorie Johnson, the responsibility of arranging the works aesthetically within the vast and somewhat unyielding space of the building.

But the visual effect was grandiloquent — far surpassing the exhibitions of previous years. The building now has, in addition to its charming natural light, penetrating exhibition lighting and plate glass entrance doors. It has acres of pale sea-grass matting which combines with the light to create a soft golden atmosphere. The old, dank, Meat Market smell has disappeared — instead one is aware of the perfumes of turpentine, fresh paint, freshly sawn wood and the reeds and grasses being used in the new basketry workshop.

The appointment of several permanent exhibitions' officers has eased the problems of installation. The vast central space — once a street running through the building to accommodate the meat carts — was cleverly divided into an irregular pattern of display areas. Apart from the wood and jewellery — which tended to be concentrated in certain areas — the other crafts were distributed throughout the installation assisting in its overall unity. The use of an offset arrangement of grey and white display pedestals also helped give the installation its form.

The permanent collection was shown in several of the bays to the left of the main area enabling the spectator to compare standards and to understand the nature of the stylistic changes inherent in the 1983 exhibition. Further down the building the craft workshops were a hive of activity — a great basket against the back wall destined to carry the passengers in a forthcoming hot air balloon expedition. The Meat Market Craft Centre seems to be rapidly approaching its

Opposite page: *Andrew Cadzow, 'Sculptured Jar', stoneware body, sprayed opaque underglaze and oxide copper decoration, 1983*

optimum level of potential and so belies the sceptics who may have thought the building could never be filled, let alone transformed into a warm glowing, bustling environment for human cultural activity.

Most of the participants' names were familiar — a few new. As an over-all, generalised, criticism one could observe that the truly high points of the exhibition were the works of several new-comers and some who have been around for a very long time now. One expects something new, fresh, vital from young crafts people, some of whom have been the recipients of a much enhanced formal education in the crafts. Such exuberance should be credited at the outset, though the work's long term value will eventually establish itself. But, when the establised craftsman, given the temptation to continue producing successful works for a perceived market, continues to improve the quality of his work, generous and unstinting acclaim should be awarded.

Unfortunately there exists, in between, a large number who have found a successful mode but failed to develop it further. There is a degree of cynicism or a great absence of self-criticism involved when a craftsman, invited to exhibit in a major annual show, produces works which are almost indistinguishable from those shown last year, or to be seen concurrently in hundreds of craft shops and galleries throughout the country. This attitude amounts to the repayment of a tribute with an insult and I, for one, can't understand it.

Having become accustomed to the various local versions of 'the good looking pot' I did not expect the innovations to be as marked as they were amongst the ceramics exhibits.

Guiseppe Raneri, 'Pierrot and the Nude' clay, 1983

Enthusiasm for ceramics has been overshadowed in recent years while glass, leather, wood and fibre have been on the ascendant, nevertheless I believe the ceramics stole this show.

Greeted at the front door by Stephen Benwell's two superb stoneware vessles with underglaze painted decoration one got the first indication that some potters who have been around for some time were holding their own. Benwell has now replaced his more obviously animistic shapes and decoration with an artistically authentic excursion into abstraction. Still softly muted, the excellence of the decoration — distributed in lively sections over the external surface of the vessels — in relation to the inventive assymetrical forms, lends these works an aesthetic excellence. Similar remarks could be made about the pots by Alan Peascod. Their iridescent blues, opulent lustres and wonderful semi-traditional off-balance forms reminiscent of oriental metal working, are a delight to the senses. Chris Sanders exhibited a wonderful, generously proportioned stoneware vase with overlaid glazes which added up to a mysterious red-purple; the size, the shape, the glaze technique all masterfully handled.

I was not so impressed with Joan Campbell's 'Raku Landscape Form'. There may be a point where the artifices of man approach rather too closely the vagaries of nature — however, there may be many who would disagree with me on this point.

Amongst the younger potters it was impossible not to respond to the exuberance of Guiseppe Raneri, Andrew Cadzow and James Draper. In addition to their very advanced craftsmanship, they introduce over-tones of 'punk' and hints of the 'trans avant garde' movement which is currently sweeping through the art world. They also bring the daring and precociousness of youth. Colour, expression, invention are exploited with abandon.

Since finishing his course at Chisholm Institue of Technology in October 1982 Raneri has been involved in two two-person shows and has, like Prahran graduate Andrew Cadzow, become one of the five potters currently using the Meat Market's ceramics workshop. Marjorie Johnson predicts that within about one year Raneri will already be an established potter — having profited from educational and bridging opportunites seldom experienced in the history of the crafts in Australia.

Raneri and Cadzow exploit the creative edge of 'international style' and a receptivity to 'multi-culturalism' which are probably accessible and permissible to the developing craftsman in a way that they may not be to those who are more established. Raneri drew upon his European background and the current mode for reworking 'Modernist' styles to make his delightful 'Still Life with Guitars'

David Green, 'Night and Day', paper, pastel, biro, cotton, fabric with cotton and silk threads, 1983

and 'Pierrot and the Nude'. The distorted faces and forms, with their Italianate pink blush, remind me curiously of the prints of the late George Baldessin. Andrew Cadzow's amazing sculptured stoneware jar, and the platter entitled 'Streetscape No. 5', are crowded with sprayed and painted underglaze images which convey the ethos and mood of the 'trans avant garde'.

I also liked the more formalist ceramic sculptures of John Johnson and Mark Stoner. Johnson is now exploring the enigma of the indefinite while Stoner continues to manipulate structural abstraction through his heavy angular clay forms. In a quite separate category — and necessarily well encased behind glass — was the egg-shell thin, delicately pleated and balanced set of four bowls by Theadora Dallas, a recent graduate from RMIT. Her work could be seen as intensely feminine; the pots are like fragile tropical lilies.

Fibre was another area where references to 'punk' and 'trans avant gardism' reigned alongside the more quietly creative experiments. The most uncomfortable moments were in the areas of fibre and leather where the effort to emulate outdated aspects of the fine arts became too strained. For this reason I disliked Garry Greenwood's ugly 'arty' leather shoes with their over-kill of reversed functionalism — amusing as it was in Claes Oldenberg's offering twenty years ago. It is one thing to give a non-shoe a life of its own, but these look as if they have already suffered enough in the service of malformed feet! Similarly there were far too many works in fibre straining to look like paintings or prints.

Outstanding amongst the fibre works, however, was David Green's ostentatious, unapologetic use of collage; his easy, nonchalant, 'throw-away' lines are evidence of his thorough knowledge of materials and processes. Here, picture making is justified — the materials form the concept. Not

Julie Montgarrett, 'Antenna', assorted fabrics, mixed media, 1983

so when dyes and stitches are used in a slick illustrational manner, as they are in the works of Kathy Berney, Jennifer Milne and Tony Dyer. But there were occasional surprises. Amanda Angel's 'Atmospheric Stills', wherein she lays various configurations of threads just barely beneath the surface of felt were particularly pleasing aesthetically, as were Penelope McKeown's delicate collages.

But the most exciting work in this section was by Julie Montgarret. The larger piece, 'Dreamless Ceiling', was quite threatening; it seemed to get away from her, like a mad scientist's spider that grew too big to handle. The smaller work 'Antenna' was much more successful. Both are quite 'punk'; rods, like magicians' wands, roughly bound with brilliant silks and velvets are crudely attached to aggressively shaped black backgrounds which are stitched, patched, gashed, sprinkled with broken mirror glass and nasty things like shrivelled chicken's feet. Although exceedingly raw, the final results are ephemeral, too delicate to touch. Against these creations Jenny Bannister's futuristic leather clothes, like 'Myochrome Meccano Maximus' and 'Anatomical Meccano', already look a little drab and tired — perhaps it is the nature of the material?

The glass show was not particularly exciting and seemed to contain too much of what we have been seeing recently. Never the less I was evilly fascinated by Richard Morrell's poisonous-looking toadstool-like arrangement of vases entitled 'Untitled Group'. Gerry King's 'High Time', sandblasted, engraved and acid polished indicates that he is approaching the technical expertise so admired in historic cameo glass. Flat glass panels by Anne Atkins, Maree Belot and Gerhard Emmerichs were all commendable. Ede Horton's elegant black on white, 'Drought '83', and Maureen Cahill's kiln fused panel made up of glass canes and sheet

Jenny Bannister, 'Anatomical Meccano', pigskin, satin, wadding, metal studs

glass were both exceedingly well conceived, designed and produced. But the accolade for glass must once again go to Klaus Zimmer who was assisted this year by Gisela Hunter. Zimmer has continued to evolve his distinctive style and produced several of the finest exhibits in the entire show. Quietly meditative, superbly put together, his 'China Diary' panels are of an artistic standard seldom challenged in Australian glass.

What can one say about the wood? Briefly, with the exception of David Emergy's elegant desk and some nicely made inoffensive boxes, I did not like it. In the furniture area poor taste and the rustic seem to predominate, while Barry Mills' 'Untitled' — an installation like those we used to see in the Mildura Sculpture Triennial — raises yet again the tired old question of the art/craft definition. The irony is, that while it is hardly art, it is not craft either.

I have not mentioned jewellery and metal craft. Here my opening remarks may apply most aptly. So much looked passé, overworked and dated. For this reason I appreicated Robyn Gordon's silk organza rouleaus made up into that extravagant, opulent, ephemeral, thoroughly desirable ornament called 'Poseidon's Collar'.

'Australian crafts, 1983' is the fourth exhibition held annually since the centenary of the Metropolitan Meat Market in 1980. Its objectives are — '. . . to reflect the state of contemporary Australian craft for the instruction of the very large craft interested public, to increase appreciation of fine craftsmanship, good design and creative form and imagery and to assist Australian crafts people by promotion and sale of their work.'

This year's exhibition has fulfilled all these aims, has brought to our attention the new drift which is currently affecting the whole spectrum of the arts and crafts and has again pinpointed those standards of excellence which mark the works of our master craftsmen.

Jenny Zimmer

Jenny Zimmer is Senior Lecturer in Art History and Theory in the Fine Art Department, RMIT.

Above: *Maureen Cahill, Untitled, coloured glass cane, sheet glass*

Robyn Gordon, 'Poseidon's Collar', silk organza, rouleau, plastic

Johannes Kuhnen, Teapot, sterling silver, anodized aluminium

MONDAY BLUES

'People need metaphors in order to cover distances: without them they'd never leave for work in the morning, or come back in the evening.'
(Jean-Luc Godard, Le Monde, 8 August, 1982).

MONDAY Blues is about art metaphors, myths, and microcosms. To quote Pat Grummet and Richard Brecknock, Monday Blues ... 'Is about the indestructible nature of the human spirit, and about the links that exist between people and the textiles they use in everyday life.'

The ideas behind Monday Blues started to flow during the 1979 Tatachilla Summer School, when Pat, Richard and that indefagitable bundle of energised ideas — David Green — started talking about that most magical dyestuff — indigo. Pat (a trained pharmacist) calls indigo: 'The magical dye. It comes out of the vat a pale yellowy-green, and as it oxidises in the air, it transmutes into a rich shade of dazzling blue.'

When the Fibreworks Collective was formed late in 1979, Pat Grummet and Richard Brecknock had initial ideas for two separate projects for the 1980 Adelaide Arts Festival. David Green, being in Melbourne, was no longer involved. By the time the Fibreworks Collective had put together its group of projects for funding proposals, the two projects had successfully fused into one project — Monday Blues. It had become two separate statements, inexorably linked by the common use of the indigo dyebath. What were these two areas of interest?

Pat Grummet: 'The initial impetus for my part of the project arose from my pet hate — hanging briefs on the clothesline. I started working out how many I may have hung through twenty years of marriage, and three children. It was something over 24,000 pairs (added to 13,000 nappies), and it made a very long clothesline. I thought about how fashions have changed over the years, and how briefs got smaller as the children got older. I'm very involved with studying clothing as a reflection of cultural and personal mores. It occurred to me that here was a perfect way to record my family's history.'

As an accomplished and highly-regarded fibre artist in her own right, Pat was attracted to the idea of the vulnerability of the family group in society that Richard Brecknock espoused: "tents are this thin membrane protecting the family from the outside world. Tents have been historically vital to many nomadic peoples over the centuries as a form of easily transportable shelter. My own love of tents comes from many years of camping, and many wild, stormy nights bundled in a sleeping bag, with the elements pounding around that fine textile membrane. Also, balmy nights sitting in meditation within the glowing textile womb. Tents also provide an interesting insight into the patterns of growth within the family unit. In my own young, unattached carefree days, a small two-man tent was all we needed. As the members of our group married and had children bigger and bigger tents would appear — much to the amusement of the group. Finally (as the children gained teenage independence) up popped the little tents again.'

The unifying image for the textile myth and metaphor was the colour blue. 'Blue is in the sea and the heavens; blue is the clear, fresh brightness of Omo; blue is the shady secrets of Blue Beard, blue jokes and blue movies; blue is upper-class bloodlines, rinses and stockings; of working class collars and denim — not forgetting those true-blue Aussies, Bluey & Curley! The blues are the boredom of repetition, the depression of the oppressed.'

Indigo is a special blue to Richard and Pat: 'It's probably the most used dyestuff ever, in the primitive sense. It's got something about it — a feel about it from the mystique of the dyeing process. The end result of the dyeing is a blue that has a life in it that you don't get with any other dyestuff. You put fabric into a scungy, horrible smelling vat and pull out a putrid green thing. Then suddenly — it turns into this wonderful blue before your eyes. Just like magic.'

Monday Blues lived as an idea for over two years, due to previous committments, ill-health, and the lack of a suitable site. Then in May, 1982, the project became a reality. On a vacant lot next to the multi-storey education building in central Adelaide, the blue blossomed ... Twice a day for ten days, the day-to-day Monday Blues of a typical family of two adults and three children were hung out for all to see. Knickers and nappies; twenty years of fashion of the most intimate kind from 1959 to 1979 were displayed. As the clothes (specially dyed to represent each member of the family) billowed out, the microcosm of the family home was an indigo-dyed, striped tent, which expanded and contracted with the birth, care and emergence of the children. The children, finally independent as personalities, were represented by three smaller tents, (dyed their own individual shade of blue) as the family home (tent) remained big ... and empty.

We'd been there for nine days. When we arrived at midday, there was a little Telecom manhole tent in place on the pavement, with two blokes in it.
'What's this, are you going into competition,' said Richard.
'No,' said the Telecom bloke, 'we just thought you'd been here for so long that you needed a telephone.'

The reaction in mid-city Adelaide was extraordinary. The population consists mainly of office-workers, who daily looked down on this growing artwork from their office eyries. People passing by were at first astounded, then intrigued. Documentation 'on-site' and in the neighbouring education building gallery prompted more interest.

Monday Blues was not without its problems. The physical size of the project was one of them. How do you locate, in correct chronological order, knickers and nappies from 1959 to 1979? Then dye them dark blue for Dad, white for Mum, and three shades of blue in-between for the kids?

Pat Grummett: 'There were some strange reactions from some of the op shops. A lot of them don't stock knickers. And for a straight-looking, middle-aged lady to be going around buying scores of knickers — well, it was a bit of a surprise!' The actual dyeing took weeks, using a special vat that held 260 litres of indigo dyestuff. Richard says: 'Almost everything had to be dyed, then re-dyed. For some of the step dyeing (the tents for instance) I built a big frame in a guillotine arrangement, which meant we could lower the whole thing in.'

The first night (after putting up two stages of washing, and the small tent) we went home quite happy.
Next morning, we turned up at the site — there was the little tent — bravely standing alone, with no washing.
What happened to the washing? Vandalism?
'Well, we thought so. Then we went inside the little tent ... and found it all carefully folded up in a pile. Someone had taken it in for the night for us!'

Monday Blues was funded in part by the South Australian Government and the Crafts Board of the Australia Council. It was an exciting and colourful experience for the people of Adelaide. Perhaps the last word should belong to one blue-besotted bystander, who — squinting at the rows and rows of blue washing — said:

'Is this an artwork
or the Liberal Party hanging out their washing?'

Garry Benson

Garry Benson is a Film and Television Producer/Director with the Open College of South Australia's Multi-Media Unit. He is also a weaver of tapestries.

Historical Building Becomes Gallery

Photography by Noela Cerutti

View from staircase to the Mezzanine Gallery of the former Primitive Methodist Church in Brunswick Street, New Farm, Brisbane

THE crafts movement in Australia is fast becoming characterised by its use of historically significant buildings. There is the Meat Market in Victoria, the Jam Factory in South Australia, the Craft Centre in New South Wales is a former Sailors' Home and now the Primitive Methodist Church in Queensland becomes a Potters' Gallery.

The official opening of the Potters' Gallery was performed by the Governor of Queensland, His Excellency Sir James Ramsay on April 29, 1983.

The formalities included the unveiling of a porcelain plaque made by Association member Dianne Peach who is well known for her delicate porcelain sculpture.

It was a gala occasion for the guests and members who moved throughout the buildings to see the workshop, kiln room and galleries. Once the official segment of the evening was over, guests were treated to demonstrations by Queensland Potters' Association members, Kevin Grealy at the wheel, Yvonne Bouwman handbuilding and Barbara Steiner decorating.

The former Primitive Methodist Church has been transformed into a stylish two level gallery, housing the Queensland Potters' Association Collection, the Pottery shop and exhibition gallery on the mezzanine level. The Association have added a room between the church and the hall for its members. It is a pleasant area built of Besser brick, lattice and glass, its roof line continues from the workshop which prevents it from dominating the church.

The purchase of the hundred and nine year old Primitive Methodist Church in New Farm was possible through a dollar for dollar grant from the Queensland Government and further funds were forthcoming from the State government when the Association drew up plans to redesign the use of the buildings.

The sun is still shining on the Queensland Potters' Association as they have just received another grant, this time from the Utah Foundation, to restore and paint the church building; even the original colour has been discovered by the Association's architect and will be used to paint the church building in one of Brisbane's oldest suburbs, New Farm.

The busy suburb of New Farm is at the end of the Fortitude Valley business and commercial area. In the early convict era of Brisbane's settlement, the food needs of convicts and soldiers were met by a crop and market garden in South Brisbane. When this could no longer supply the needs of the increasing population, a new farm was started on the north side of the river. The name New Farm remained.

The Queensland Potters' Association have strived to preserve the Church's history and heritage. Some of its members attended the last service held in the church and at the first service held in the new church, Queensland Potters' Association President, Mrs Betty Crombie received a gift of a set of the Church's china made in England in 1891.

The Pulpit has been retained along with the Altar rail and a pew has been restored to further remind visitors of its former use.

It is unlikely that the Queensland Potters' Association will have to move for some time and if in the event that it should once again grow too large for its premises, the Association can depart with the knowledge that is has contributed to preserving a part of Queensland's history.

Roz MacAllan

Roz MacAllan is a freelance arts writer based in Brisbane.

General exhibition area on ground floor of the Potters Gallery

View of Mezzanine Gallery

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN POTTERY AT RMIT

HUMBLE Egyptian pots, some up to six thousand years of age, were shown in the Faculty of Art Gallery, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, in June last year. They came from the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria and the Australian Institute of Archaeology and had not been exhibited previously. In fact, Egyptian ceramics have been somewhat neglected on a world-wide basis. This is because they could not rival the more sumptuous funerary arts of Ancient Egypt. Consequently, we know of only two previous exhibitions devoted soley to Egyptian pottery, one in West Germany and the other in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Broad storage jar, Naqada 1 (mid-late), Hu Grave B64

Black-topped vessels of the Pre-dynastic Period, C.4500-4000 BC Naqada 1-11

Storage jar, C.4500-4000 BC

The exhibition, curated by Dr Colin Hope, formed part of the art history program at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Directed particularly to the students of ceramic design, it also attracted considerable interest from fine art students who responded to the elegant simplicity of the forms of these purely functional wares.

As objects made for a limited term of household use, without any pretensions of glamour or ceremony, these pots had been reduced to elementary shapes and produced with as much ease and assurance as could be mustered by the Egyptian potter who, as Dr Hope pointed out, did not enjoy much status in his community and was no doubt required to produce vessels at a very rapid rate.

What interested me was the fact that while we were installing the exhibition we could have gone downstaris to the ceramics department and collected a range of pots which could have compared very closely with the Egyptian wares in terms of shapes, potting technqiues, clay bodies, firing and decorative effects. What was exciting with the Egyptian pots was to find the marks of the potter's hands as he had rhythmically scraped the pot to improve its shape and surface. These marks were millennia old but they corresponded closely with the potters' marks made today — reminding us once more that pottery is a most ancient craft with perhaps the most continous traditions of pleasure and usefulness within the human environment.

The pots were arranged in chronological sequence from the oldest of about six thousand years to the most recent, about three thousand years. This sequence also, incidentally, clearly demarcated changes of style. One interesting sequence was a series of tall jars used for carrying liquid. The applied wavy bands of clay at the neck of the jar were originally intended as lugs whereby the jar could be handled, but gradually evolved into a decorative motif of wavy lines.

Accompanying the exhibition were large photographs of archaeologists' reconstructions of ancient Egyptian potting techniques and kiln firing methods. There was also a comprehensive catalogue with a scholarly introduction by Dr Colin Hope which was distributed to all students. A limited number of copies of this remain and could be sent to educational institutions, libraries and individuals. Anyone interested in receiving this catalogue could write to me at the Fine Art Department, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

Jenny Zimmer

Reviews

'AUSGLASS II': Some thoughts on viewing the Exhibition at the Jam Factory, Adelaide — January 1983

AT the time of writing this, participants in the Third Ausglass Conference will have been wending their way home across Australia — many of them, if not most, well and truly under the spell of "avant garde" glass. What is "avant garde" glass? It rejects the traditional aspects of glass crafting and uses glass as a medium for objects which sometimes aspire to the status of sculpture but which may more often be categorised as technical experiments, non-functional constructions or even inept kitsch.

One overseas guest lecturer at the conference spent several hours of the program presenting slides of a range of such works gleaned from artists and museums around the world. Many of the objects shown already reside in public collections such as the Corning Museum of Glass and a lot of them, or very similar examples, have been represented in overseas journals and catalogues during the last decade. Quite a few were singularly uninspiring, and the lecturer's laconic monologue — often giving what he *assumed* to be the dimensions and the techniques used — was descriptive rather than evaluative. But looking about it seemed to me that the conference participants were entranced, appearing to devour every crumb of visual information from abroad as if it had come from another planet. Some were heard to remark that they had lost all enthusiasm for "blown" glass, or for "architectural" glass and that the only future lies in "sculptural" glass.

Of course this attitude is to be expected. Glass artists around Australia have recently been treated to the major travelling exhibition, 'International Directions in Glass Art', and most have been elated and surprised by the experience. Frankly, I find this response peculiar. The immediate confrontation of the work of art *is* of utmost importance but I thought more enthusiasts would be prepared for the impact of the 'International Directions' show simply through having browsed through the multifarious glass publications which have appeared, produced anywhere between Tokyo and London, over the last decade.

Why was the 'International Directions' show such a surprise and why are the words of visitors so often treated as revelations? These questions became doubly pertinent when one looked at the 'Ausglass II' exhibition at the Jam Factory. Here, rather humbly installed amidst more predictable pieces were a scatter of objects which would stand up in any international company. I refer to works by Stephen Skillitzi, Michael Keighery, Maureen Cahill, Warren Langley, Giselle Courtney, Gerry King and David Wright. What is more, I believe that this impression will be amply reinforced by the glass shown at the Wagga Wagga Biennial.

Stephen Skillitzi and David Wright have been developing original concepts of world class for some years and it is pleasing to note the fine sense of quality present in Keighery's constructions and Courtney's boxed image.

Why then the "cultural cringe"? There are a number of reasons. *Firstly,* contemporary glass has enjoyed a relatively short history here in Australia. The mere decade of its development has been largely given over to the acquisition of skills. In this process some artists have emerged but their efforts have become part of the process and, unrecognised within it, remain unrecognised in the face of overseas glass which has enjoyed a much longer period of gestation and fewer difficulties. *Secondly,* of the current throng of glass enthusiasts few have been associated with the glass movement from its inception. Many will have been attracted to glass by the 'International Directions' show and will be quite unaware of the radical pioneering already carried out by some Australians. This ignorance has been compounded by the fact that no Australian work was included in 'International Directions in Glass Art'. Persons unaware of the history of modern glass in Australia may be tempted to respond immediately to overseas influences and many never come to appreciate with any sense of conviction the struggles of the earlier converts. *Thirdly,* established glass artists are finding themselves faced with an awkward dilemma. Should they hold fast to their steady development of skills and sensibilities or should they chase an international-style reputation? Some may be inclined to think that this will come about by the empty imitation of overseas trends and a frantic conversion to sculpture or to "neo-dada" techniques of assemblage.

The latter is a course of action to be entered into with the utmost caution. In the area of painting the Australian artists who have an international reputation are those who, like Sir Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Brett Whiteley and Colin Lanceley, took their ideas and works, nurtured in the Australian environment, out into the world for wider criticism. Those who later imitated international trends in an effort to circumnavigate the problems of origin never won the same acclaim. It should also be remembered that glass, in itself, is just another material — like clay, or wood, or metal. It glitters but it can be fools' gold. Given fundamental skills it is relatively easy to make functional objects — maybe even easier to make non-functional objects — but, it is difficult to make *art.* Nor is it necessarily so that the non-functional may be art but the functional never will be. Some of the finest glass art of all times, in fact most of it, is functional. The judgement that an object made of glass is art may have as much to do with the skills of metal working, ceramics, woodcarving or electrical installation as it is has to do with glass. Art has little to do with the use of a particular medium — it has to do with a happy conjunction of multiple contingencies not the least of which are conception, form, content and meaning.

At the same time there *is* much to be learned from experimenting with materials, exploiting chance and jettisoning one's habits. For some the indulgence in such experiments may enrich and expand their central concerns, for others it may lead to completely new departures. In either case the result may be art. The main thing is to remain critical and self-aware.

The 'Ausglass II' exhibition at the Jam Factory was an immense improvement on 'Ausglass I', in 1979. The number of artists involved was considerably reduced, as were the exhibits. This permitted a more discriminating installation and some really interesting visual passages were attained. I enjoyed the view through Pavel Tomecko's futuristic gems to Warren Langley's neons or from Bram Fynnaart's kaleidoscope to Neil Roberts' wall pieces. I thought flat panels by Ede Horton and Berin Behn were commendable. Others are going to have to extend themselves again. There was a strong feeling of *deja vu* experienced in the vincinity of pieces by Richard Morrell, Nick Mount, Peter Goss and Julio Santos. Perhaps some of these artists, who have contributed so much in the past, are marking time until the atmosphere is more balanced?

Holding off is not, of course, one of Stephen Skillitzi's qualities. The centrepiece of the show, and to my mind the most challenging artistically and conceptually, was his work entitled 'Skillitzi's Ground Zero Nuclear Game'. Though it could never be described as a 'good-looking glass object' it is a work which provokes, promotes and

sustains throught.

Congratulations are due to Ausglass president, Gerry King, and to the organisers of both the Ausglass Conference and the exhibition. Whatever the reader may detect as cautions within this critique they are probably insignificant when compared to the vast and more enlightened enthusiasm which now surrounds the glass movement in Australia. More knowledge is always a good thing, provided it is tempered by judgement.

Jenny Zimmer

'Wagga Wagga Glass Biennial II': Pleasure, Enigma and Discomfort.

HOW, having also seen the 2nd National Glass Biennial in the City Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga (February-March 1983), I feel in a better position to comment on the progress made in glass during the year 1982. It was instructive to see the Wagga Wagga show after Ausglass II in Adelaide. Judy Le Lievre's superb forward planning and publicity meant that many of the works shown at Wagga Wagga were, necessarily, made before those shown in Adelaide and therefore form an interesting intermediary between the formerly steady progression of Australian glass and the jolt caused by the presence in Australia of the 'International Directions' exhibition. The beginnings of this disruption, whether it later proves to have been detrimental or beneficial, can be more clearly detected in 'Ausglass II'.

The two exhibitions, shown concurrently, have demonstrated the rapidity with which Australians have responded to overseas influences and developed a strong degree of confidence in their own powers of expression.

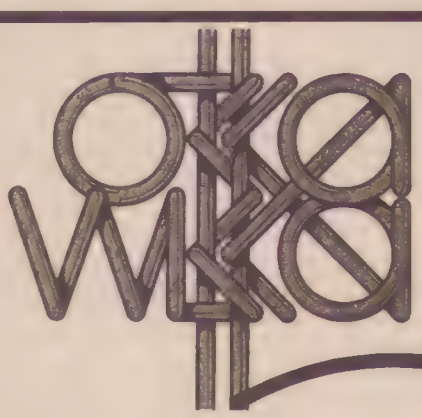
A clear example of this is the work which is now beginning to emerge from Sydney — markedly from Maureen Cahill and her students. Sydney's glass studios are not the ascendant while the prominence of the older established centres of studio glass — Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne — seems challenged. Cahill has been a well known glass personality for some years but her exhibition profile has been low. Suddenly her work has begun to dominate major group exhibitions. A change in scale has much to do with it. Previously specialising in rather precious miniature works, she has switched her attention, without sacrificing quality, to massive glass installations. A slow gestation seems to have placed her in a position to exploit the artistic and sculptural qualities of glass with an ease and sense of style which some others find difficult or impossible to attain.

One hesitates to make a counter example of another artist's work but criticism is in danger of becoming "toothless" and therefore "useless" unless some contrasts are drawn out. Graeme Stone is a young artist with abundant ideas who chose his direction towards the "art object" much earlier than most. But, he has not yet developed sufficient craftsmanship or the easy nonchalance necessary for his ideas to work. There is usually something uncomfortably unresolved or inhibiting about his work. Some may claim that this gaucheness is artist-intentioned, or part of the work's curiosity value. I would have to disagree — there is not, at the moment, the wit or suavity that one has come to expect from works of art which fall into that category. Stone's Wagga Wagga exhibit looked good from certain angles, the basic concept was capable of success, but, in the final analysis form and content did not *fit*. Stone has imagination, and great tenacity, but should capitalise on his undoubted gifts by spending much longer thinking things through, or making models or drawings of his pieces so that he can resolve the inadequacies they have invariably displayed. Some artists can always get away with the happy accidents of chance assemblage — Picasso was a notable example — but most have to work and think hard to ensure that an easy balance of form and concept is reached.

Maureen Cahill's installation at Wagga Wagga came much closer to the kind of *fit* of form and concept which I have tried to describe. There was a feminine "tidiness" in its arrangement, carefully planned spatial elements and some interesting — perhaps a little unnerving — formal relationships between the frontally planar squares and the "jet-stream" of flying elements behind them. The sculpture seemed to be about glass and its physical properties. The modular shapes which zoomed off behind each of the fixed hanging squares appeared to be the reaction of the material itself to its desecration with the sandblaster. The irregular shaped piece fully blasted out of the third square lay, like a glassy blood stain, on the floor below. The various conditions of glass — from transparent, to translucent, to opaque, were exploited to the full in the orchestration of the visual effects. This installation had to be made in glass, no other material could have supported the concept. The work was therefore artistically authentic — form, content, craftsmanship and idea all *fitted*.

Craftsmanship is also a very important consideration. Jennifer Farley's sculptural piece was very adequate from a formal point of view, but, even allowing for the fact that it had been damaged in transit, the craftsmanship was lacking. On closer inspection the glass elements looked tortured or strained beyond their natural tolerance. This is another example of the kinds of balance which must be achieved; in this case between the formal idea and adequate technique to achieve it.

Others whose sculptural expertise is showing refinement and much promise are the artists Brian Hirst and Anita Pate. Modest in scale, their combined works were comprised of arrangements of cones of glass, and were some of the best in the show. They too have taken trouble to expound the qualities of glass and its sub-quality, light. Their neon-filled cone was a very pleasing object. Neil Robert's 'City Shrine' was a further monument to the properties of glass. His method for this piece,



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the vertical stacking of graduated sheets of plate glass, has been exploited before, but Roberts brings to this work a delicacy of formal arrangement and a respect for finish which marks him as an artist who is concerned to pursue quality with patience and care.

Stanislav Melis and Richard Clements, both consummate craftsmen with the "molten metal", brought a slightly different set of aesthetic issues under consideration. Their pieces exploited the natural flowing, organic qualities of the medium. Melis deliberately reinforces the traditions of hot glass by manipulating the same kind of glass rods which have been used since antiquity to create the richest of decorative glass. Tempered by his response to the Australian environment, most particularly the sea and its living organisms, he uses the rods to suggest tangles of seaweed, anemone fronds and tentacles. His work conjures up all the gently wavering, subtly tangled, sinuous forms associated with the sea bed.

Clements works his own magic on yet another of glass's traditions. His exquisitely crafted objects, despite their deceptively non-functional appearance, are often just bottles or containers for liquids. Of course they are superlatively witty, enigmatic and artistic "bottles". With such a sure grasp of technique, form and decorative quality Clements can afford to be as laconic as he pleases. He resides comfortably in the nonchalant, throw-away, "things are not what they seem" tradition of Marcel Duchamp and Claes Oldenberg.

Perhaps Gerry King, on the evidence of the Wagga Wagga show now entering a more Baroque phase in the production of his little couture "torsos", has squeezed almost as much as he can form the idea. A very demanding craftsman, seriously concerned with matters of form and content, it will be interesting to see where he goes from here.

Amongst the two dimensional *wall* or *window* pieces the exhibits by Warren Langley and Klaus Zimmer continued to have substance and vitality. Langley's blue neon tube set against a sonorous dark textured ground had an aura of mystery and intrigue which did not wear off and Zimmer had again combined his fine sense of pictorial abstraction with superbly imaginative utilisation of the glass artist's traditional techniques. Zimmer urges the utmost out of the medium while Langley circumvents this process by electrical illumination.

So far the emphasis of this critique has been on the more obviously avant garde exhibits. I have definitely not revised my strongly held belief that the functional glass object can, on occasions, aspire to the condition of art. There were some extremely fine but more conventional items in the exhibition. Julio Santos contributed some beautifully made and highly desirable perfume bottles. Their ribbed forms and pink and white decorative twists and curlicues are absolutely delicious and technically very advanced within the Australian context. Tom Persson's goblets, with their lustrous abstract marks suggestive of aspects of the Australian environment appealed, naturally enough, to John Olsen who purchased them for the Wagga Wagga permanent glass collection. Olsen also favoured the satisfying shapes and abstract elegance of Isogai's "male" and "female" forms. John Elsegood has continued to direct his attention to the marriage of form and decoration achieving quiet elegance with a lotus-like vase with geometric decoration.

Some new names appeared too — Don Wreford, from Melbourne, contributed dark, glowing, incadescent stoppered bottles, Rhonda O'Connor has been experimenting with resist ornamentation and Pauline Delaney's stylish little vases made rather sophisticated use of black-white counterchange. Peter Crisp's latter day *Art Nouveau* interpretation of sinuous plant growth was shown advantageously in his distinctive deep blue vase while Alex Mitrovic achieved glowing depth and lustre in his heavy glass vessels. All these exhibits promised a great deal for the future.

But there were other exhibits which caused me, and I am certain many others, a degree of visual discomfort. The reasons for this included poor craftsmanship, gauche and ugly conceptions of form or decoration, and undistinguished glass blowing. Another group of works posed a greater enigma. One hesitates to damn what appear to be extremely poor showings, but wonders what on earth is going on? Are some members of the Australian *coterie* pulling out, are they having us on, have they been overrated, are they disinterested, will they eventually come clean or are they regaining energy for something truly remarkable in the future? I am sure I am not the only one to whom these questions have occurred.

The exhibition itself was very professionally handled. Tastefully installed, over the entire gallery, it seemed much more imposing than 'Wagga Wagga I' in 1981. The catalogue was widely distributed, as a centre-fold in *Craft Australia,* well in advance of the exhibition and much of the same catalogue published internationally while the exhibition was still in place. Such attention to detail, and the extremely generous number of purchases for the permanent collection, does much to overcome Wagga Wagga's geographical isolation. All credit must go to director, Judy Le Lievre, for her continued foresight and encouragement of glass in Australia.

Jenny Zimmer

Workshop 3000 Exhibition, Crafts Council Centre Gallery, 100, George Street, The Rocks, Sydney. 25 February to 27 March, 1983.

IT is a long time since I attended an exhibition opening that attracted such a large and enthusiastic audience. One felt oneself to be participating in a singular and important event. This impression was not simply owing to the fact that contemporary jewellery exhibitions are fairly rare in Australia or because it was the first travelling exhibition by a group of important jewellers from one part of the country to show in another since 'Jewellery from the West' (although a sustained comparison between the two shows would be illuminating). Rather, it has something to do with the special nature of Workshop 3000, which is much more than an association of jewellers who happen to be located in the same spot geographically. Workshop 3000 is a group of young designers working under one roof with a shared ethos (see article on pages 34-39 in previous issue) and who take their jewellery making very seriously. Fortunately, their

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dedicated attitude does not prevent humour being a fundamental element in the work of at least three of the designers.

The development in the work of the three members who also exhibited at the Workshop's Inaugural Exhibition is most striking. In the intervening period Annie Holdsworth was one of the winners of the Diamond Valley Competition and all three have exhibited internationally. The experience and confidence they have subsequently acquired manifests in their recent work. The departure of Rowena Gough and Carlier Makigawa in the interim is to be regretted for, along with David Selkirk, I believe these five to be the most significant jewellers of their generation working in Australia today. On the other hand, Sue Lorraine's present work is both impressive and highly original and promises to bring an important new element to the group as a whole. The feeling of creative diversity and stimulating interaction from within a shared viewpoint, is even more noticeable than it was in the group's earlier exhibition.

This can be seen with particular clarity in the work of Marian Hosking where several of her pieces indicate interesting new departures. The most notable are probably the twig brooches, combining delicacy of form with an allowance for the subtle juxtaposition of metallic and organic forms.

The associations which can be derived from the actual, or implied, juxapositions of different materials also have a rich role to play in the work of Susan Cohn and Annie Holdsworth.

Any hesitations which I have previously observed in Susan Cohn's work are certainly not in evidence now. The boldness of form, and almost riotous use of colour, should not blind one to the sort of contemplation that is invited by her best pieces, such as her bracelets in anodised aluminium or automotive enamel with their contrasted bindings. The humorous, satirical and associational elements in her work could form the subject of an article in themselves. Along with Annie Holdsworth, she is the most intellectual designer among contemporary jewellers in Australia and it is no coincidence that they are both extremely articulate about their work. With Susan Cohn the humorous and the subtly conceptual, the bold and the discreet, usually coexist within an individual piece. With Annie Holdsworth the range of mood, and changes of response required from one piece to another, is often quite marked.

A highly individual sense of humour characterises Sue Lorraine's work. Like Susan Cohn, she constantly invites us to consider the very nature of jewellery, and all its associations, but I also admire particularly the way in which she is able to invest the ephemera and detritus of daily life with an almost iconic status, partly through the high degree of finish she gives her work.

Brenda Ridgewell is more traditional and conservative in her approach, and she is at her weakest when being most experimental as in the cuff bracelets. The comparison with Marian Hosking's geometric bracelets is interesting, for although, in the final analysis, these don't work either, their failure is more interesting, more revealing, and one senses a purpose behind the experimentation which illuminates Marian Hosking's work as a whole — they might fail as worn jewellery, but as a design exercise they are significant. Brenda Ridgewell's work can be seen to best advantage when the design elements are kept to a minimum as in the silver and shakudo brooches (although these would only really work in sets) or the open bracelets, which work better individually, but are not as interesting.

A memorable feature of the exhibition was the imaginative and intelligent use of a space not naturally conducive to the showing of objects on such a relatively small scale, while comfortably accommodating the large crowd which eventuated. Susan Cohn successfully utilised the screens as well as the display cases, the former to particular advantage as the remainder of her material suffered somewhat from being too arranged — an approach sometimes alien to the nature of the material itself.

Hilary Davis

Hilary Davis is Lecturer, Design History, at RMIT.

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BOOKS

Pottery on the Wheel' by Elsbeth S. Woody, published by John Murray Ltd., London. Recommended retail price $21.50.

The forming process for all pots on the wheel consists of centreing clay; dropping the hole; opening up the clay; raising the clay/drawing up the clay; shaping and trimming. Each step is dependant on the successful completion of the previous step, and are all illustrated extremely well in the first chapter.

This book describes in detail each salient point, summarised briefly and concisely at the end of each section; an excellent method of reinforcing the learning. I am a little disappointed in the information on wedging clay and the centreing of clay as it has neglected to show alternative methods. However, maybe the author would prefer to allow the potter to develop his or her own skills in this area and thus only instruct the reader on wheel forming techniques.

Specialised throwing techniques present such things as throwing off the hump; throwing large pots; section throwing; coil throwing. All are areas of great interest and develop expertise.

The author deals with the principles of section throwing as it applies to large pots as well as to putting knobs on lids and throwing pedestals on bowls and goblets. Another extremely interesting chapter on coil throwing, which I have seen being done in Japan, is good for a beginner to use in large wheel work. It fits snugly into the category of easier forming of large pots.

Throwing Specific Forms appears to be an informative chapter as it shows more concern for design and function, with lids to match pots and careful planning and measuring so as to get a good fit with them. Lids are difficult and tedious to throw at the best of times, but careful diagrams and categorising have divided the processes into two parts/groups — those that are thrown right side up and those that are thrown upside-down. Emphasis has been placed on the pots with suitable designed and functional lids.

There is a small section on teapots which present similar problems as pots and lids and Woody has not complicated the diagrams by showing many different teapot forms. She makes an excellent point about throwing several lids and spouts of various shapes so that the potter can experiment with different combinations. The teapot is a composite form and it is generally difficult to shape into a cohesive whole. The shape and placement of these parts are dictated not only by aesthetic consideration but also by function.

Finally, deep bowls and flat plates are illustrated side by side so as to show each form at the same stage of development. Very good comparisons. The appendix of this book is quite informative with brief information on clay, glaze descriptions, kilns and wheels.

Pottery on the Wheel is a very well illustrated and informative book which makes easy reading for the novice and should be part of any reference library.

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John Linek's work appeared in the Spring, 1982 issue of *Craft Australia*.

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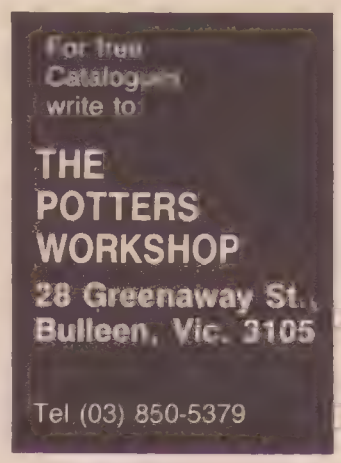

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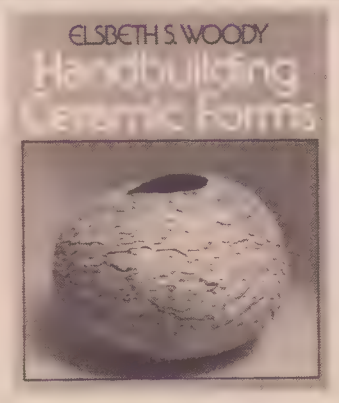

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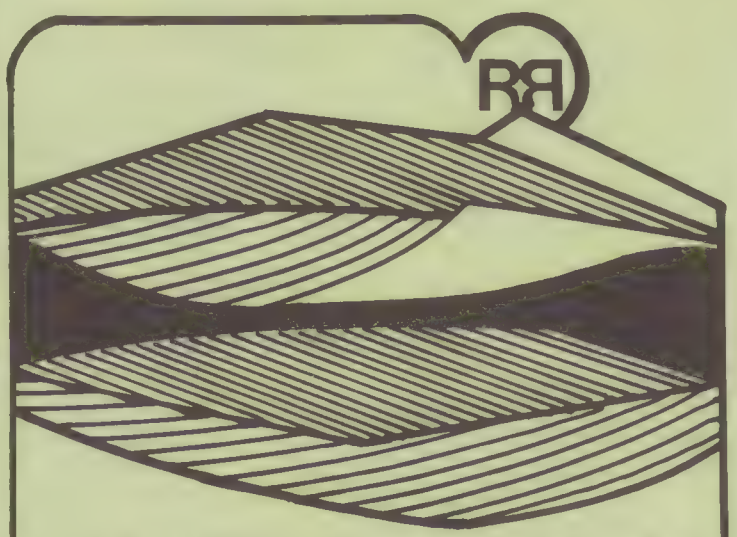

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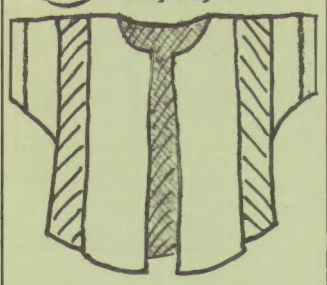

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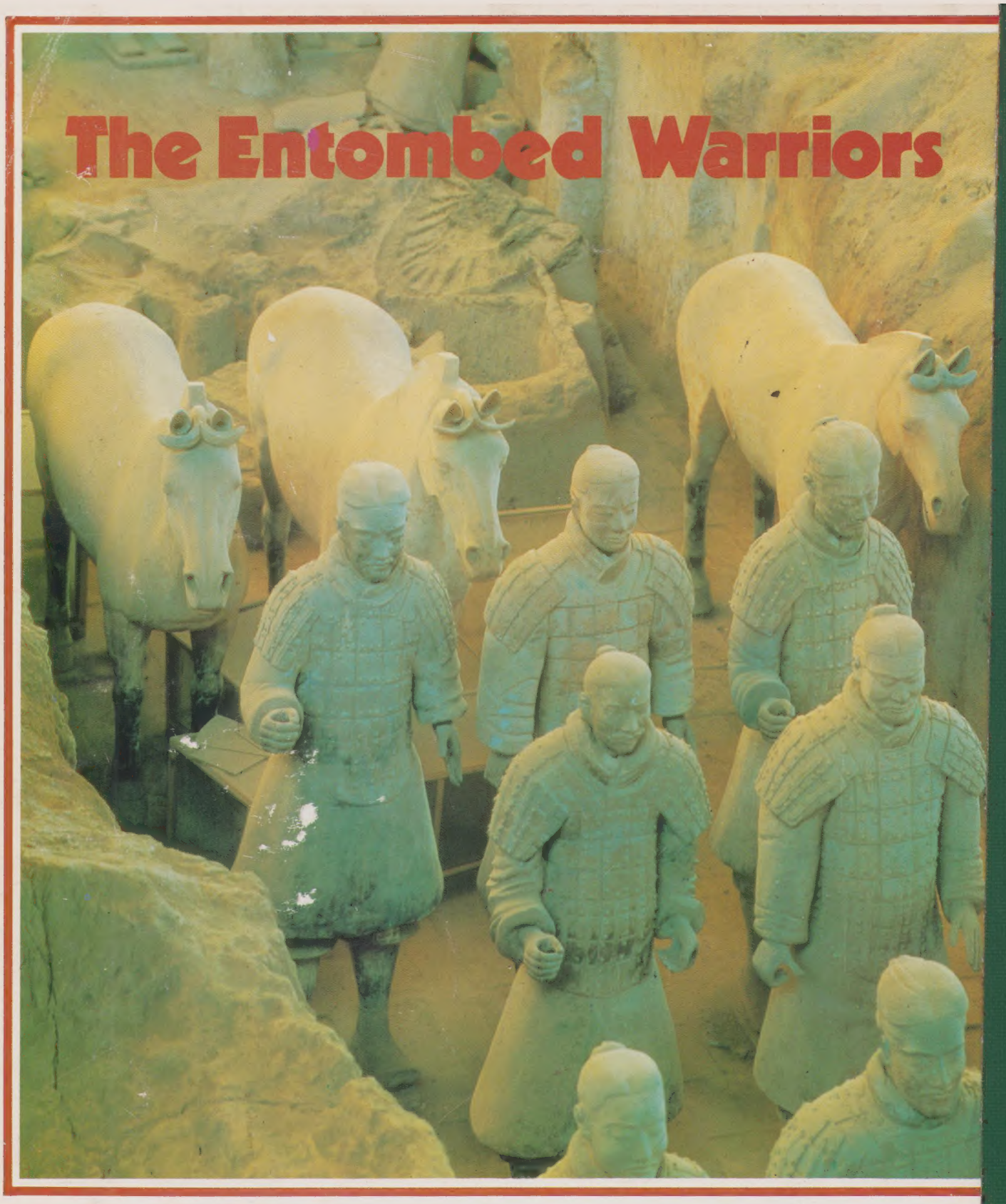

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